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A

# Critical Differtation

ON THE

# BOOK of JOB,

WHEREIN

The ACCOUNT given of that BOOK by the Author of *The Divine Legation of MOSES demonstrated*, &c. is particularly considered; the ANTIQUITY of the BOOK vindicated; the GREAT TEXT (Chap. xix. 25—) explained; and a FUTURE STATE shewn to have been the POPULAR BELIEF of the ancient *Jews* or *Hebrews*.

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INTRODUCTION



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(Ch. xiv.) I know that my reader's lively  
I have with the fragments of the British Museum  
and T. Davy and B. Law, in the May 1800.

# INTRODUCTION.

**T**HERE are few books that have more exercised the thoughts and studies of the learned, or more deservedly engaged their esteem and admiration, than the Book of JOB; and therefore an endeavour to illustrate it may hope to find acceptance, if it prove successful; or if it fail in some particulars, to obtain pardon at least from those who are apprised of the difficulty of the undertaking.

MY reading it in the original gave me such a notion of its high antiquity, and made me see something in it so venerable and simple, that I could not possibly reconcile myself to the new conjecture of a very learned writer, when it made its appearance in the world; nor admit either of the low date or allegorical turn he has given to the book, however wrought up with great art, and an uncommon force of genius.

I SAW moreover, that the celebrated text (Ch. xix.) "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. which he interprets of Job's hope of a temporal

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poral deliverance, would, by no means, bear that construction; but points at a resurrection, and a future day of judgment.

UPON these two heads therefore, being a little given to scribbling, I could not forbear putting my thoughts in writing; and then, as was natural, communicating it to one or two persons only, with whose acquaintance I was favoured, and whose judgment I had reason to set a value on. And this was all that was at first intended or performed.

BUT as an enquiry into the meaning of the forenamed text had a near affinity with another question, which appeared to me of some importance, and about which nevertheless the learned are divided, viz. "Whether the doctrine of a future state were the popular belief of the Israelites under the Old Testament;" I was at length induced to an examination of this point likewise. And the result was, that I saw abundant evidence throughout the Holy Scriptures to make me conclude in the affirmative.

THE whole then of what is here presented to the public is, for method's sake, divided into three parts: and these again (for the reader's ease and conveniency, shall I say, or for my own?) into short sections.

IN the first Part, I take the liberty to examine the account which is given us of the book of Job in the Divine Legation: and this employs

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the eight first sections. Wherein I have had a particular regard to the learned writer's argument for the low date of the book, drawn from supposed allusions to the Jewish law or history in some passages of it. As these passages are selected with great skill, and carry in them the most plausible objection to the antiquity of the book, I have given them the fuller and more distinct consideration. I have also endeavoured to vindicate the characters of Job and his friends from those inconsistencies which are first without just grounds charged upon them, and then endeavoured to be accounted for by their acting of that double part, which an allegorical reference to another story, and to other things and persons, supposes and makes necessary. If in the course of this, so just vindication, and in order to it, I have treated the imagined allegory with less respect than it deserves, (of which however I am not conscious) it may be owing to the plainness of my understanding, averse to subtilty and refinement, where a more easy and obvious account of things is to be had.

PERHAPS this same plain way of thinking has made me rest in the old hypothesis, *viz.* *That the book, though a poem, is in the main historical, and probably Job himself the writer of it.* However, something new is offered in support of this conjecture (I wish its newness may not prejudice the reader against it) in the four last sections of this part.

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IN the first of them I vindicate the historical truth of the relation against the objections of M. Le Clerc in particular; who hath said the most, of any of the writers that I know, against it.

IN the second, I consider the supernatural incidents (what some learned men, by mistake, have called the ornaments of the *Drama*) viz. the sons of God presenting themselves before the Lord, in the beginning of the Book, and the divine interposition at the conclusion; and draw a proof from hence of its being an inspired writing; and a probable argument that Job himself was the writer of it.

PERHAPS there is something in this section that may call for the reader's indulgence, as in attempting to explain the visions of the prophets I have been forced to strike into an unbeaten path. I have taken the best guide however, the Holy Scriptures, for my direction; and have endeavoured to get what light I could from thence. If I have been mistaken in any particular, I hope it is such as can have no ill consequence; and I am always open to the admonition or correction of better judges.

BUT having shewn it probable that Job himself was the writer of his own story, I endeavour in a following section to clear this point from the objections commonly brought against it. And as the chief of these is drawn from the style of the book, which in some places has been thought to

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carry the mark of later times; I add another section, wherein I consider every example of this kind urged by the learned Grotius in particular; and close it with an argument for the antiquity of the book, drawn from the famous text of Ezekiel (Ch. xiv.) "If Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it," &c. And this concludes the First Part.

THE Second Part, which consists but of eight sections, is taken up with an enquiry into the meaning of the celebrated text (Chap. xix.) "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. The learned writer's arguments for understanding this passage of a temporal deliverance, and against understanding it of a resurrection and a day of judgment, are distinctly considered; with a more particular examination of those texts he points at, where he supposes Job to speak of the irrecoverable dissolution of the body.

AND having thus prepared the way in the four first sections, I proceed, in a fifth, to give a full and fair exposition of the text itself; first by a literal translation of it; then fixing the meaning of the words, and expressing the whole sense and scope of the passage in a short paraphrase; and lastly, by shewing how irreconcilable the text itself is, as well as the general drift and tenour of Job's speeches, with the notion of a temporal deliverance. And this I was the more solicitous to do, because it has been a thing taken for granted, that  
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the words may be interpreted in this latter sense. And it must be owned, that several eminent commentators have thus interpreted and explained them.

AMONGST these M. Le Clerc, a name well known to the learned world, and which carries with it the greater authority, upon account of the professed freedom of his enquiries, which I am far from discommending; though I think him a remarkable instance, how much a free enquirer after truth may be enslaved to a particular notion, which being groundlessly taken up, and obstinately pursued, may run him upon a train of blunders and mistakes.

THIS learned man having once taken it into his head that the doctrine of a future state was a thing unknown to the Hebrews, has with all his critical art and sagacity, and a good skill too in the language, overlooked, perverted, strained an hundred places which would have stared him in the face with it; had not this strong prejudice made him turn away his eyes, and fix them upon any thing rather than this. I thought it not improper therefore to consider, in a particular section, this celebrated commentator's exposition of this text, and to point out the errors and absurdities of it.

AND because great stress has been laid upon that observation of Grotius and others, that the Jewish interpreters do not understand this text

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of a resurrection; to shew what little deference is in reality due to their authority, I add another section, wherein I consider the account which is given us of the book of Job by Maimonides in his *Moré Nevochim*; from whence it will appear what a wretchedly mistaken notion the Jewish Rabbins have entertained of this book, and of the person celebrated in it, and all from a mistaken persuasion, that Job was ignorant of, or, as (Maimonides says) denied a future state.

LASTLY, as it has been objected against the common interpretation of this famous text, that Job in his following speeches is altogether silent as to the doctrine of a future judgment, and another state of life; to take away the ground of this objection, I point out some particular passages, wherein he seems to me very clearly to intimate his belief of this doctrine. And this is further confirmed by an argument drawn from that remarkable rebuke of God to the three friends, (Ch. xlii. 7.) "My wrath is kindled against you—For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."—It being impossible to find any thing in their speeches that could make the difference here supposed; nay, the reverse must certainly be true, viz. that the friends had spoken more worthily of God and his providence than Job, if we set aside the doctrine of a future state. And

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8 this makes the eighth and last section of this part.

777 In a Third Part, I propose to consider that question, which has of late been so much controverted, Whether a future State were the popular belief of the Israelites under the Old Testament? And I think I have shewn, that it must have been all along the belief of that people, if they understood their own language, and were acquainted with their own Scriptures.

1-12 This point is pursued through twelve continued sections. Only the seventh, I confess, is a digression. But perhaps the reader will not be displeased to see a very difficult psalm explained, though it turn his attention from the main argument for a while.

7 P. 141 I SHALL not enter upon a particular account of these sections. Whether I have succeeded in the proof of the point which I intended, must be left to the determination of the candid and judicious, such especially as have acquired some knowledge of the Hebrew language. Though I have endeavoured to set the texts produced in such a light, as that any person of a good understanding may be qualified in some measure to form a judgment concerning it.

The method I have taken was the fairest and the fittest I could think of. I have first considered the objections on the one hand; next the



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presumptions on the other, and then from a brief deduction of the Mosaic history, and the plain and literal meaning of the common words and phrases used throughout the books of Moses, as well as the other books of Scripture, shewn a future state, to be the doctrine of the *Old Testament* throughout. More particularly, that the Israelites under the Mosaic dispensation, all along believed the separate existence of the soul; a distribution of the good and bad into two different classes, or societies, during this their separation, a resurrection, and a future judgment. I have also pointed out the ground upon which they believed these doctrines: and all this (I hope) without the least disadvantage to the Christian cause, which can no way more effectually be promoted than by shewing the entire harmony of the *Old Testament* with the *New*.

BUT because we began with the book of Job, it was fit we should return to it in the conclusion: And this is done in the four last sections.

IN the first, I consider the characters of the persons that bear the several parts in the dialogue. From whence the reader will have the design of the poem before him in one view, and may be able to discern what is most instructive under each character. I have likewise ventured to say something of the speech of God that closes the dispute; or rather, just to look at, and admire it. For when an object is excessively bright, you can

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only catch the full blaze of it for a moment; if you dwell upon it longer, the weak eyesight is soon dazzled and confounded.

THERE is one chapter that seems to stand alone (as it were) in the middle of the poem, but is none of the least beautiful parts of it, though very obscure. The commentators, I am sure, appear greatly puzzled how to explain some passages in it. I mean chapter the 28th, the subject whereof is an enquiry after wisdom. A very alluring subject, and therefore I have been hardy enough to attempt an explanation of this chapter in the three last sections. And as the concluding verse of it, "Unto man he said, behold the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom," &c. gives a plain solution to the enquiry, and at the same time furnishes a good moral to the whole; I take occasion from hence to recommend a due esteem and reverence for the Holy Scriptures, in the best manner I am able, and conclude.

I HAVE been thus large and particular in giving an account of the book, that the reader might see at once what he is to expect; and that this introduction might serve instead of an index to the whole.

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# THE P R E F A C E.



*ABOUT* six years being now past since the first publishing this book on *Job*, the author might justly be thought wanting in that respect which is due to the publick, should he suffer it to appear a second time without a preface. The favourable reception it met with gave him the more pleasure; as he persuades himself, it was chiefly owing to the nature of his subject; and, on the writer's part, that love of truth which prompted him to seek it at the fountain-head.

Nevertheless he has not been unattentive to the exceptions that may have been taken to any part of the book. And what hath come to his knowledge of that kind, (to speak at length in the first person) I shall here freely lay before the reader.

A passage p. 178. of the former edition, where I mentioned the circumstance of my situation as an excuse for any errors that might have crept into the book, having been excepted against as liable to misconstruction; though I received the intimation but at second hand, for I had no personal knowledge of the gentleman that made the objection;



I have complied with the delicacy of his judgment, and struck it quite off: being unwilling to let any thing stand, of little consequence in itself, that might give offence to any good man, or prejudice the honest intention of the book. And yet, if Plutarch's observation be well grounded, that it is necessary for a writer of history to reside in some great town where arts and learning flourish, for the advantage of libraries and learned men of all sorts to converse with\*: a writer on the Scriptures, surely, may for the same reason wish himself at certain times nearer to the seats of learning, without being supposed to intend the least reflection on his own neighbourhood; unless it be a reflection to say, that we are two hundred miles distant from any university.

There are two other particular passages, which were excepted to by the same person; which whether I should impute to his delicacy, or to my own free and unguarded way of expressing myself, the reader must judge. Perhaps there may be somewhat of both in the case, and so I may be glad to compound the matter.

But not to dwell long upon a trifle; he was scandalized at my saying (p. 392. (Even a silly woman could express her faith of a resurrection, &c. as if the epithet had reflected something derogatory to the character of Martha the sister of Lazarus. Whereas I am willing to believe and hope, that most of my gentle readers took it as it was meant, to denote a plain simple woman; one who to all appearance was not deeply read in matters of divinity, nor overmuch given to speculation; but cumbered about many things of quite another nature; for which she received a soft rebuke from our Lord himself, which I might plead in my defence if it were necessary. But I believe I may venture to let this expression pass without any farther explanation.

The other exception of this gentleman, was to my calling a mistake of bishop Patrick's (p. 153.) the good bishop's blunder.

But if there be a fault here I must freely and fairly plead ignorance in excuse for it. For though I was long since taught not to call a spade a spade, I confess I have no notion yet, but that a blunder may be called a blunder.

\* See Plutarch's preface to the lives of Demosthenes and Cicero.

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I have a great respect for the memory of bishop Patrick; whose piety, learning, industry, and judgment are conspicuous in his writings. If he be any where deficient, it is where a critical knowledge of the Hebrew is required: and I suppose it was this that made him so often depend upon the superior skill of his admired friend Dr. Allix. Nevertheless his Paraphrases and Commentary on the holy Scriptures are a valuable work, which I have often consulted to my satisfaction. But, opere in longo (as the poet says) the exactest writer may sometimes chance to nod.

And therefore I hope I shall be allowed the benefit of this plea, for a writer far less considerable than Bp. Patrick, for I am about to make this worthy prelate the most suitable amends in my power, by acknowledging two gross blunders of my own.

One is at p. 315. where in explaining Deut. xiv. 1. Ye shall not cut yourselves—in the Hebrew, tithgodedu; I read it by mistake (as the Hebrew letters for n and g are very much alike) tithnodedu, and so explained it. Whereas tithgodedu is the same word which is used 1 Kings xviii. 28. of the priests of Baal cutting themselves after their manner with knives, &c. So that it seems rightly rendered here by our translators, ye shall not cut yourselves. And yet the Chaldee paraphrast in both places turns it by a word that signifies tumultuari: and as the noun gedud always denotes a troop, or band of men; the verb may very naturally mean assembling in troops or tumultuously together. But as little depends upon fixing the sense of the word here; I have rather chosen to strike off four lines where the mistake lay.

The other blunder of mine is at p. 412. where the sound misled me, and not the sight: for I mistook one t for another in the word tishpot, and explained it as if the last t had been a teth and not a tau. But here too it happens to be of little consequence; and I have corrected it by striking off two lines.

The reader probably will conclude from these instances, that whoever meddles with the Hebrew ought to have his eyes, as well as wits about him. And he will judge very rightly. I have often admired, and cannot but ascribe



it to that providence which has ever signally displayed itself for the preservation of religion amongst men; that books so old as those of the Hebrew Code, considering the nature both of the language and the character, should come down to us so entire as they are at present, and with so few variations or mistakes of transcribers. For these mistakes are, in reality, allowing for the circumstances I have mentioned, few and inconsiderable. And even some of these mistakes afford a convincing proof of the religious exactness with which these books were anciently transcribed. This may seem a paradox to some; but I could give instances if it were a proper place.

I was the more solicitous however to correct these two errata in the book; lest some Cappellus should arise in future times, who might take occasion from these hallucinations of mine to increase the various lections of the Hebrew text.

But having thus rectified what I had myself discovered to be amiss, and considered the exceptions that have come to me in the oral way: I am now, with the reader's leave, to take notice of one or two with which I have been favoured from the press.

The first is in Mr. Heath's Essay towards a new English Version of the Book of Job, p. 129.

Job says, Ch. xxxi. 26—28. To give it in Mr. Heath's version, thus, If I looked up to the sun when it shone, or to the moon when it went on in its brightness, and my heart was secretly enticed, and my mouth kissed my hand; this also were a crime for the judges, for I should have given the lie to God who is above.

Our English translation thus—This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge.

There is no other material difference in the two translations. And the Hebrew here is, Gam hu yavon pelili—rendered by the learned A. Schultens in his translation of Job, Etiam hæc iniquitas arbitratoria. He had given a like interpretation to the phrase before, at v. 11. where he renders yavon pelilim, crimen arbitrorum quod arbitri vel mitissimi condemnare debeant; or, an iniquity so plain, that a person of the mildest disposition,  
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if he were put to judge of it, would certainly condemn it. *And this sense of the word pelilim he confirms from Deut. xxxii. 31. Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges, pelilim.*

*This interpretation of Schultens I had followed; and from thence argued, that there is nothing intimated in this text of Job, Ch. xxi. 28. of a judicial trial or punishment, but only the notoriety of the sin observed. Adding, that supposing it were rightly rendered, an iniquity to be punished by the judge, yet this might well be understood of the supreme Judge of all\*.*

*But Mr. Heath's note here is this—Essay, &c. p. 129.*

This passage seems to me a decisive argument against the great antiquity of this book. The laws of the Mosaic polity were, I apprehend, the only ones in the world which punished idolatry; and it was the only nation before whose judges a man could be accused for paying adoration to the sun and moon: this book therefore must have been written after their government was settled. The sense which is put on this passage by the learned Schultens, and since adopted by the learned Mr. P. is evidently strained, in order to evade the testimony which this passage bears against the great antiquity of the poem. The passage from the song of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 31. carries in it the strongest testimony for the sense I contend for; the image there being, the cause coming to a trial, whether the God of Israel or the gods of the nations were the most powerful; and this, he says, is so self-evident, that if their enemies were to sit as judges, they would determine the cause in favour of the God of Israel. What is this but to suppose that the *pelilim* are, in the primary sense of the word, judges. And indeed Schultens hath rendered this by a word which in sound only differs, but not in sense: for what is *ar-biter* but one who decides a questionable point? and

\* *Crit. Diff. on Job, p. 23.*

*judex* is no more. And Mr. Peters is so pressed with this, that he is reduced to this evasion; *But supposing it were rightly rendered, an iniquity to be punished by the judge; as this may well be understood of the supreme judge of all, who shall say that it does not belong to him, as the Lord and Sovereign of the world, to punish those who in effect deny him to be such, and transfer his honour to another?* No one will say it, but thus much may be said, that it is not at all to the purpose; for Job is here evidently speaking of judges here below, the same judges who were to inflict the punishment for adultery; for thus much the phrase *גַּם הוּ* plainly imports.

*I have given the note entire, that so the argument may be seen in its full strength.*

*And in answer to it, I must observe first, that Job is not here speaking of judges either above or below; much less the same judges who were to inflict the punishment (if that be the meaning) for adultery, v. 11. For the word here is in the singular, pelili; whereas v. 11. it is in the plural, pelilim. And this distinction is well observed in the Bible-translation, though not in Mr. Heath's. I will not call this an evasion of this learned gentleman, but I hope I may, without offence, be allowed to call it an escape.*

*Next, as to גַּם הוּ, gam hu, etiam hoc, even this (as it should be rendered) we have no need to go back sixteen or seventeen verses, along to v. 11, for something to which it may refer. No, the author of the Book of Job appears to write with more connection: and it evidently refers to what went immediately before, viz. the slight token here given of an idolatrous purpose or disposition. For the Hebrew rendered literally is thus,*

*If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon splendidly walking, and my heart were inticed in secret, and my hand kissed my mouth: gam hu, even this were Yavon pelili—These are the two words in dispute, whether they mean, an iniquity to be punished by the judge; or such as any good man of these times would judge to be so.*

*Now if pelili properly signify a judge, (that is, an authoritative judge) as Mr. H. contends; I think it must mean*



mean the supreme Judge of all: because no other could possibly take cognizance of such a crime as this. We see it is here described as a seduction of the heart; and this in secret, bas-fether; where there was no human eye, then, to observe it; or if there had, yet it was expressed by an action so slight, that (sure) no human judicature could possibly take notice of it. No bowing of the head for the mouth to meet and kiss the hand; but only the hand raised just to touch or kiss the mouth. For this way of expressing the thing is very observable vat-tifshak jad-i le-pi, et oculata est manus mea os meum; as the interlinear version literally—And I could wish that whoever attempts a translation of the Scriptures, would make it as literal as possible.

If such a crime as this then were to be brought into judgment, I suppose it appears plain that none but God could judge it. But if put as a case, for the opinion and resolution of the good men of those times, worshippers of the true God like Job; I am persuaded they would all of them have pronounced it a great iniquity or impiety.

Nay whether they would not have punished it, and that severely, if any proof of the thing could have been produced; is more than Mr H. or I can tell.

It is enough for my purpose that they would have condemned it in their private thoughts or opinion. And this was the sense which I preferred, in my own judgment, after Schultens, as best agreeing with the natural signification of the word pelili; the other supposition was only put as an *utrum horum*, for such as might be pleased with it; and to shew, that even if this sense were allowed, it would not serve the intended purpose.

Mr. H——'s mistake throughout his whole note proceeds from his not distinguishing two things which are very distinct in themselves, a judgment of authority and a judgment of discernment or a mere opinion. His argument required that the word pelilim should signify judges in a sense of authority, such as were empowered to try and punish crimes. Otherwise the laws of the Mosaic polity here instanced as the only ones that punished idolatry, would be nothing to the purpose. And yet this authoritative



*tive judging is presently confounded with another sort of judging very different from it, the mere giving of an opinion in a case. For this is certainly the meaning of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 31. Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges, (pelilim) that is in the judgment or opinion of our very enemies. What Mr. H. suggests of an image here given of the cause coming to a trial—their enemies to sit, as judges whether the God of Israel or the gods of the nations were the most powerful—if meant of a real, formal trial or judgment, is visionary. For such a cause, certainly, never came before any court of judicature since the beginning of the world. If meant in any other sense, it is beside the purpose. And this gentleman himself, and every skilful Hebrew must soon see the difference, if he were to change pelilim here for shophetim, which is the proper word for judges, meaning officers of justice.*

*That the word pelilim cannot signify judges of this sort, in its primary sense at least (as Mr. H. would have it) is very clear. It is well known, that the primary sense of an Hebrew word must be fetch'd from the root or verb. And the verb pillel signifies merely, to be of opinion, to think, or judge in that sense: and (in the conjugation hithpahel chiefly) to express our thoughts in prayer, to intreat effectually, or appease. Beside these, I know of no other meaning the word carries. And for the former sense, I need only cite old Jacob's words to his son Joseph, who had presented his children to him for a blessing: Lo pillalti (says the good old man) I never thought to see thy face again; and lo! God hath shewed me also thy seed. Gen. xlviii. 11.*

*To judge in an authoritative way, is always expressed by the word shaphat; as common a word almost as any in the Bible: And, what is remarkable, never used in the sense of pillel, for a mere judgment of opinion. So that the Hebrew in this instance (and perhaps an hundred others) is less equivocal or ambiguous than the Latin or the Greek: for judico and κρίνω, in these two languages seem to be used, almost indifferently, in either sense.*

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One of the most necessary rules in the study of the Hebrew, is to attend to the precise meaning of the root : for this may usually be traced through all its branches. And a neglect of this rule is a principal source of the wide differences and mistakes of the interpreters, both ancient and modern. One may observe it particularly in the instance now before us, of the word *pillel*, *pelilim*, &c. For it is certain that if Mr. Heath mistakes here (as I think he does) he mistakes in good company : and there are several places, where not only our own translators, but others of undisputed learning and good sense, have rendered the words by judging, judges, &c.——

What then shall an obscure writer do, who ventures to explain things otherwise than the generality of interpreters have done before him ? He can only appeal (I think) to the genius of the language, and shew that if he errs he errs according to rule : and this will be some excuse for him at least, and save his modesty.

Now I am persuaded that the sense of the verb *pillel* given above, may be traced through all its branches, and in every instance : and that there is no place of Scripture, where it ought not to be taken in one or other of these senses, viz.

To think—to be of opinion—to give an opinion ; and so to arbitrate——which is the farthest we can go with this branch.

Again, to express our thoughts in prayer——and so, to intercede—to intreat effectually—or propitiate. This takes in the whole compass of the other branch. And all these senses plainly differ from that authoritative judging here supposed.

And yet it is certain, that not only our own translators, but the generality of interpreters, at least among the moderns, have explained the word in certain places in this latter sense. As there is a necessity of examining these places, the Phil-Hebraean Reader will excuse it, and others may skip over a few pages if they please.

Psal. cvi. 30. as it is translated in our Bibles, seems to favour Mr. Heath's notion : Then stood up Phineas, vav-jepallel,



jepallel, and executed judgment, and so the plague was stayed.

*The old translation indeed, much nearer to the genuine sense of the word, Then stood up Phineas and prayed. Had it been said, interceded; it might have better expressed the Psalmist's meaning: for Phineas, as we learn from the history, interceded effectually, though not by word but deed, and turned away God's wrath from his people. So that by that act of Justice to which his zeal for God had prompted him, he is said to have made an atonement for the children of Israel\*. And therefore both the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate render jepallel here by a word that signifies propitiated. Take it either in this sense, or that of interceding; they are both very apt, and belong to the second branch of significations given above.*

*But now, if we were to suppose jepallel, in the case of Phineas, rightly rendered executed judgment: I think it would not serve Mr. Heath's purpose. Because we find by the history, that there was no form nor process in this judgment: it was a case extraordinary, where a divine impulse set him above all rules. Or, if we suppose such a procedure customary in those ancient times; and that pelilim (Job xxxi. 11.) may signify such judges as these assembled in a tumultuous way, to try and punish for adultery, or any other heinous crime: then this will be one good proof, amongst an hundred others, of the great antiquity of this book. As it agrees with the manners and customs of those ancient times, when few large states were formed, but men lived in families and tribes; and the whole neighbourhood, upon occasion of any crime committed, came together to make enquiry, to pass sentence by a general voice, and so condemn and execute at once. We have several allusions to such a state of things in this book of Job; and one or two (if I mistake not) in this very chapter.*

*Thus Job xxxi. 24. If I have lift up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate; then*

\* Num. xxv. 13.



let mine arm fall from my shoulder-blade. *That is, I suppose, let me be pulled in pieces by the mob. A method of justice probably but too frequent in the infancy of states; and which, as they grew more and more civilized, was always discountenanced and suppressed.*

So again v. 33, 34. we have a passage the more remarkable as it alludes to the history of the first man, and his endeavouring to hide himself after his transgression: which shews, (as well as several other allusions made to it in Scripture) that the relation given us Gen. iii. was all along considered as historical; and not merely as an *Æsopian Fable*, as a late ingenious writer seemed fond of representing it—But the passage is thus—

Ver. 33, 34. Did I cover my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my lurking-place; (for so the Hebrew, *be-chubb-i*) because I feared a great multitude, or the contempt of families terrified me?

*We see here what it was that kept men in awe in those ancient times; wicked men I mean, (for Job acted upon a much better principle) and deterred them from enormous crimes: it was the rage of the multitude, or populace; who naturally judge, or rather feel what is right, but whose passions are strong; their counsels, resolutions, actions, precipitate. Or else, it was the contempt of families (as Job expresses it) or the publick shame of being condemned by the neighbouring families or tribes, assembled for this purpose. And here we may observe the first elements perhaps of civil government.*

Job indeed in the two former chapters (*viz. chap. xxix. and xxx.*) hath given us such an admirable picture of himself in the height of his prosperity, and the authority which he then maintained among his people; and again, in the depth of his distress, when his authority was quite sunk, and himself despised and trampled on; and this intermixed with so many lively strokes of the rudeness of those times: that it is a wonder any one can read it either in the original or translation, (but in the original especially) without acknowledging the venerable antiquity of this book—

which

*which as it is the point in question, I hope I may be excused this small excursion here.*

*There is another place where the verb pillel may seem to be used for judging, and has been so translated, viz. 1 Sam. ii. 25. Old Eli says to his wicked sons, If one man sin against another, וַיִּלֵּל (u-pillel-o) Elohim, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, מיִּתְּפַלֵּל לוֹ (Mi jithpallel fo), Who shall intreat for him? So our translation.*

*But it must seem strange, that the words pillel and jithpallel, which have the nearest affinity with each other, should signify two things so very different as to judge, and to intreat; and this in the same sentence. The natural rendring of the words is this, If one man sin against another, u-pillelu Elohim, they may intreat, or they may propitiate God. They may bring their cause before him, and pray him to decide it: and in this case, a determination being once given, and full satisfaction made, every thing is set right again. But if a man sin against the Lord, in so high and presumptuous a manner as these sons of Eli did; where shall the appeal lie, or who shall intreat for him? How shall he bring his cause, or who shall plead it for him before the incensed judge?*

*The mistake is in the pointing, pillelo instead of pillelu. But all the old translators, the Chaldee, Septuagint, and Latin Vulgate, favour the reading pillelu, and the interpretation I have given of it. St. Jerome takes the word in the sense of propitiating, and renders it, instead of exorabunt Deum, exorari potest Deus: changing the Hebrew phrase according to his custom, for the sake of the Latinity, or to make the sense appear more plain. It is well known, that all the judgments with this people, as they were to be pronounced according to the divine law, were therefore considered as God's judgments.*

*As for the word pelilim, there is but one place that I know of, where it has the appearance of being used in a sense of authority; and that is, Exod. xxi. 22. If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband shall*



shall lay upon him, ve-nathan bip-pelilim—and he shall pay as the judges determine. So the translation—

*Whereas, had judges in a proper sense been meant, the word shophetim had certainly been used. But here is no point of law to be debated or determined: only the damages to be estimated betwixt the offender and the husband; for which two honest neighbours either chosen by the parties or appointed by the judge, were very sufficient. Here then, nathan bip-pelilim, means, he shall give, or pay, as the arbitri, or arbitrators, (I suppose the difference is not great) shall award—quantum arbitri judicaverint, as the Latin Vulgate well explains it: and so this falls in with that sense which I had given above, as the last in the first branch or line of significations.*

*I have but one text more to examine; and that, (I believe) if any, will set us right.*

*Isa. xxviii. 7. We have the word pelilijah; which, according to the genius of the Hebrew, must signify the act or office (whatever that may be) of the pelilim. This is the only place where the word occurs: and therefore let us see whether from this exact writer we may not learn the true sense of it. In describing the great corruptions of the Jewish people he gives this flagrant instance amongst others; The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink: they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.*

*So our translators after others—Where to err in vision, is the charge against the prophet; and to stumble in judgment, is to be understood of the priest. But the word here translated judgment is not mishpat (the proper word for this purpose used perhaps an hundred times throughout the Bible) but pelilijah; a word (as I said) which never occurs but this once: and can we suppose the prophet would use it instead of mishpat, if he meant the same which mishpat signifies? No certainly. But there was another branch of the priest's office, beside  
their*



*their judging controversies (which they did in certain cases,) for which a more apt word than this before us could not have been found in all the Hebrew tongue: and that was, the giving their opinion in any matter of law about which the people should consult them; or in short, resolving cases of conscience.*

*For as the priest's lips were to keep knowledge, and the people were to seek the law at their mouth, (Malac. ii. 7.) and as the ritual laws more especially were some of them attended with great nicety in the observance of them; it is obvious to perceive that the people would have frequent occasions to resort to their priests for direction, and satisfaction of their doubts.*

*And this was one reason of that wise establishment, which instead of allotting to the tribe of Levi a portion of the land of Canaan by themselves, gave them cities and a settlement in the midst of every other tribe, that so they might be always near at hand to be consulted. Which as it obliged them to the daily study of the law; so (by the way) it gives us an assurance from the very nature of the thing, that as the copies of the law must have been numerous, one at least in every city of the Levites for the use of their priests and judges: it is morally impossible that all these books should have perished, so as for every copy to be lost, in any period of the Jewish state whatever—which is the extravagant assertion of some men, built on weak and insufficient grounds.*

*But the text of Isaiah, which we are now considering, seems plainly to refer to that remarkable prohibition laid upon the priests the sons of Aaron, Levit. x. 9—11. in the following words, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation; lest ye die. It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean. It follows, and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses.*

*As*

*As guides and instructors of the people then, they are forbidden by this law even to taste wine, as some have thought, when they entered into the tabernacle of the congregation: and much more therefore all excess of wine upon this and other occasions. And it is with the breach of this command. that Isaiah here charges some of the priests of his time: that they were too much given to wine, and thereby disqualified themselves for the performing this very useful branch of their office, the resolving of their people's doubts when they consulted them.*

*There is a passage in Ezekiel, where these two branches of the priestly office, their resolving of cases and judging of controversies, are put together; and the prohibition of drinking wine likewise mentioned but two verses before. Ezek. xlv. 23, 24. "They (the priests) shall teach  
" my people the difference between the holy and prophane,  
" and cause men to discern between the unclean and the  
" clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment,  
" and they shall judge it according to my judgments".*

*Here, where a controversy at law is spoken of, we have the words mishpat and shaphat, which properly import judicature. And had the prophet Isaiah therefore meant this part of the priestly office in the passage we have been considering, he would certainly have expressed it by the same word. But as he plainly meant the other, I must insist upon it again, that he could not have found a more apt or more expressive word for it in all the Hebrew language than this which he has used.*

*If any one after all should chuse to say, that pelilijah may here mean arbitration; as probably their priests were often chosen upon occasion to arbitrate differences among the people: I may allow it without any manner of detriment to the argument I am upon. For this is one sense to which the word extends; but differs much from an authoritative judging and punishing of crimes.*

*The reader has been tired (I doubt) with so long a disquisition about the meaning of a word. But when I differ from the generality of interpreters, and especially our own translators, (which I neither take a pride nor pleasure in the doing of, for it rather gives me*  
a  
*pain:)*



pain :) I think myself obliged to give a clear and a sufficient reason for so doing.

I confess, I had another view in it likewise: which was, as far as the occasion made it proper, and the sifting of a word would carry me, to do justice to the sacred writers, and to the language wherein they wrote. Their style, if thoroughly considered, will appear far from being ambiguous or uncertain, as some have represented it. And if things appear oftentimes dark and doubtful to us in the holy Scriptures; it is but modesty and justice to believe, that the defect is rather in ourselves.

I hope I have said enough to satisfy Mr. Heath, that the sense which Schultens gave to the word *pelili*, is by no means forced, but natural: and that were it otherwise, yet no argument can be drawn from this passage against the great antiquity of the book of Job.

But since I am engaged with this learned gentleman upon this subject; I shall take leave to point out a mistake in his Preface, p. 8. where he argues that the writer of the book of Job must have been "by nation a Jew," from the name *Jehovah* there used, "known only (as he says) "to that nation."

Now I think it appears from the book of Genesis, that this great name was known long before that nation had a being, and even from the beginning. Eve herself uses this name of God expressly upon occasion of the birth of her first son. Gen. iv. 1. "I have gotten a man" (says she) "eth *Jehovah*," with *Jehovah*, meaning with his blessing probably; many other instances might be given.

There is one obscure text indeed, which hath been often brought in proof of what Mr. H— suggests, viz. Exod. vi. 3. God there says to Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by (the name of) God Almighty: but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known unto them."

If we take the word known, here, in the strictest sense, it contradicts the history in many places: and to set up one text against an hundred, would be a very hazardous way of interpreting Scripture.

But



But what then can be the meaning of this last clause, "By my name Jehovah was I not known unto them?" Plainly this; by my name Jehovah was I not distinguished.

It is evident from the foregoing history, that the true God was known to his true worshippers by this and many other names; such as, (to give them in the Hebrew) El, Elohim, Adonai, Jehovah, Jehovah Elohim, El velion (the high God) El volam (the everlasting God) and as here in this text, El Shaddai, God Almighty. But by none of these was he known as his one peculiar name, a name which he had appropriated to himself in preference to the others, and by which he now declares he would be distinguished for the time to come. "Wherefore say to the children of Israel, Ani Jehovah, I am Jehovah; and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians; and I will rid you out of their bondage; and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God; and ye shall know, that I Jehovah am your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am Jehovah." Exod vi. 6, 7, 8.

Of all the names of God this seems to be the most expressive of his essence, as it denotes the one eternal self-existent Being, from whom all other things derive their being, and on whom they must depend. And no time could be more seasonable for God to give himself such a name as this, than when he was about to take this little nation for his own peculiar people, and to plant and to preserve amongst them the worship of himself alone, in opposition to the polytheism and idolatry of the nations all around them. For if any thing could preserve them from worshipping the little subordinate deities of the Heathen nations, it must be the consideration of what this name imported: that the God they were to worship, and who had chosen them for his people, was the one supreme and self-existent Being, the Creator and Governor of the universe; who had no equal, nor would suffer any rival.

Accordingly this was the name with which Moses was sent to this people, and to Pharaoh: the name which Pharaoh slighted (*Exod. v. 2.*) “Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice?” And the name by which Moses wrought such wonders; and baffled all the boasted arts of their magicians (shall we say?) or the powers of the false Gods they worshipped. For “Jehovah shewed himself to “be greater than all their Gods; and wherein they dealt “proudly he was above them.” *Exod. xviii. 11.*

This then was that great name, known to their fathers amongst other names, but by which having delivered them from the Egyptian bondage the God of the Hebrews was to be distinguished for the future. And therefore the first laws that were given them from Mount Sinai are prefaced with this name to give them their proper weight of authority, *Ani Jehovah Eloheca, I am Jehovah thy God.* And we find several particular laws afterwards enforced with the same sanction, *You shall observe to do so and so, Ani Jehovah.* The design of that dreadful roll of threatenings set before them *Deut. xxviii.* is thus expressed at verse *th: 58th.* “That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name Jehovah thy God.” And so the Prophets, when they would recall them from idolatry; usually put them in mind of this great name by which the true God had vouchsafed to call himself. As if the *Shemagn Jisrael*, (which the Jews repeat so often and with such devotion) were to be always sounding in their ears, “Hear O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, &c. *Deut. vi. 4.*

It is impossible to derive this name from any other root, than that which signifies to be: nor do any of the commentators (that I know of) attempt it. The first therefore and the most natural idea it conveys is that of the self-existent Being. If we refer it to the *Hiphil* conjugation which signifies to make to be; it then very aptly denotes the great Creator of the Universe. If with *Le Clerc* we understand it to mean one who makes to be (that is, fulfils) what he had promised or foretold\*: then no-

\* *Edm qui facit ut fit quod futuram dixit. Le Clerc on Exod. iii. xv.*



thing can be more natural than to refer it to him in whom all the divine promises and predictions centre. And so in this one word seems to have been wrapped up the whole mystery of the Jewish and Christian dispensations. It is certain that the one cannot be understood, but by its relation and connection with the other. If we consider the Jewish dispensation as preparatory to the Christian; every difficulty in a manner, every phenomenon in the Old Testament is solved. God's extreme jealousy over this little nation; his severity in certain cases; his amazing condescension to their rude capacities and apprehensions; the law, the ritual, the miracles, the prophecies; all the arts of the divine government over this wayward and refractory people (for it is to be remembered that he governs men as men, or free agents) appear wonderful indeed, but rational, consistent, wise, just, gracious, very intelligible, and admirable. Take it in any other view, or in that narrow selfish one wherein the Jews are fond of understanding it, as a history of the partial regards shown by the maker of the universe for one family or people: the whole appears dark, intricate, strange, unintelligible, and unaccountable.

But none can be at a loss for the design, who reads the Scriptures with attention.

This people are expressly told by Moses, by the prophets; that it was not for their righteousness, nor for their sakes, that God had given them the land of Canaan, or vouchsafed them so many wonderful deliverances; for they were a stiff-necked and rebellious people: but for his own sake, and his great name's sake; (meaning, no doubt, this name by which the supreme Being is so happily expressed) and to carry on the designs of his providence.

It is very observable, that the Jews were never in a better disposition, more religious or obedient to the law of God, both King and people (for any thing that appears) than in the reign of Hezekiah; when they were so miraculously preserved from the destruction that threatened them by the proud king of Assyria. And yet God does not tell them that he would deliver them from this imminent danger for their sakes; but "I will defend this city (Jerusalem) to save it for my own sake, and for my ser-



vant David's sake" (Isa. xxxvii. 35) "for his own sake"—to let the haughty Assyrian know whom he had blasphemed—"and for his servant David's sake"—that is, plainly, for the sake of the Messiah—This must be the meaning, if we suffer one prophet to explain another. For neither David's person, who had been dead three hundred years; nor yet his family or posterity at large; or Hezekiah who was then upon the throne; can so properly be meant here; as that one eminent branch of it, to whom God by his other prophets gives the name of David, and my servant David, in the very expression here used: Thus Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I Jehovah will be their God"—And again, Ch. xxxvii. 24. "And David my servant shall be king over them: and they shall all have one shepherd."

So Jeremiah, Ch. xxx. 9. "And they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." And the prophet Hosea, Ch. iii. 4, 5. a prophecy the more remarkable, as it plainly points at some future conversion of the Jews or Israelites, (happy for them, if the time were come) when the children of Israel, after "abiding many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, &c.—" shall return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and shall fear Jehovah and his goodness in the latter days."

Whether we pronounce this awful name aright, is a very questionable point. For they who should have directed us to the pronunciation had, through a superstitious fear or some other reason, so long omitted it, that it is now quite lost with them: and they never attempt to utter this name of God, but use another instead of it. Why we should do the same I know not: or why they should condemn us for attempting to utter a name, which God himself gave to be uttered. And which whether we pronounce exactly right or not, must certainly be nearer to the right than that which they have substituted in the place

of it, without any competent authority, for any thing that appears.

It is well that they have left it in the Hebrew text, where it appears a thousand, and perhaps a thousand times. And it is to be hoped, that this all wise and gracious Being, who is high above all conception, will not be offended with us though we should lift in the pronouncing of his name; if so be that we always speak, and think of him with reverence.

But to return—If any one doubts whether the verb *jādagn*, to know, be ever used in Scripture in this restrained sense of a distinguishing knowledge, I need only point out to him, Amos iii. 2. Where God says “You only have I known of all the families of the earth,”—that is, you only have I distinguished; you only have I known “as my peculiar people. It follows, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities”——in a distinguishing and exemplary manner.

We find the same style used in the New Testament. “If any man love God, (saith St. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 3. οὐκ ἔγνωσας ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀνόματος, “the same is known of him”—known so as to be distinguished and rewarded.

And so in the passage now before us, “By my name *Jehovah* was I not known,” may very naturally signify, by my name *Jehovah* was I not distinguished—I was not known by it as my proper and peculiar name, and as I now intend to be for the future——“This shall be my name for ever, and this my memorial unto “all generations” Exod. iii. 15.

This gives so apt and easy a sense to the text, that one would wonder any one should overlook it.

If this great name, then, was known from the beginning of the world; known to Abraham in particular, (for God when he manifested himself to him calls himself by this name, and Abraham addresses him by the same name; builds altars here and there, and worships or invokes Be-shem *Jehovah*, by this name) then certainly it could not be unknown to Job, a descendant of Abraham, and well instructed in the faith or religion of Abraham, of which he hath given us in this book the noblest proofs.

And why not instructed in his language too? Can we suppose that Abraham's posterity by Ishmael; by his wife Keturah, by Esau; who peopled several districts of Arabia, and would naturally preserve a correspondence with each other; could possibly forget their mother tongue in four or five generations? If learned men can produce any proof of fact that they did so, they will say something: but till then, it will be unreasonable to suppose it. Or even to suppose that the language could receive any considerable alterations in so short a time.

And therefore I must still take leave to think, that Job, though an Arabian, might nevertheless be the writer of this Hebrew book.

Nay, I think, a probable argument may be drawn, that an Arabian and not an inhabitant of Judea was the writer of it, from Job xxxvii. 22. compared with Prov. xxv. 23. In the former text Elibu says, "Fair weather cometh out of the North": but in the latter, Solomon tells us, that "A north wind bringeth forth rain." For this is the true rendering of Ruach tzaphon techolel geshem.

Though these assertions contradict each other, they are both exactly true as understood of the two different countries Arabia and Judea, and are suited to their respective situations. For in Arabia the North-wind blew over a long tract of dry land, and therefore usually brought dry weather: whereas in Judea, the North-wind (in which name were included all the winds betwixt the North and North-west) blew from the Mediterranean sea, and therefore commonly brought rain.

Now if the writer of the book of Job was a Jew, he must have been acquainted with this curious piece of natural history, this difference in the weather in Arabia from what it was in his own country. A piece of knowledge we may justly scruple to allow to an imaginary person, of whose existence we have no proof.

Nay we have the more reason not to allow it to this supposed Jew, because our own translators, and many others, who have observed the wind from the North to be commonly a dry wind in their own countries, and not being



being aware of the difference which a different situation makes; have rendered this proverb of Solomon; instead of, "The North-wind bringeth forth rain, and an angry countenance private obloquy," (which is the natural sense) quite contrary, "The North-wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a back-biting tongue."

But the word *techolel* can never signify to drive away; or if it did, how should an angry countenance drive away what it could have no influence upon, the lashon father, hidden tongue, as the Hebrew is? On the other hand, the frowns of an angry man will naturally provoke people to give a loose to their tongues, when they are out of his sight and hearing: and this is the true meaning of the proverb.

But whoever desires farther satisfaction upon this text, may consult *Le Clerc*:—where they will find a whole column, and more, employed to explain it. And yet this learned Commentator would not infer from it as I do, a kind of proof, (and sure a slender proof may suffice in this case) that the writer of the book of *Job* was no inhabitant of *Judea*.

Having named *Monsieur Le Clerc*, I must now proceed to apologize for the freedom with which I have treated him throughout my book.

This hath been objected to me by an eminent writer, a professed admirer of this celebrated author, whose words I shall produce after saying somewhat in behalf of myself. For as few stand alone in their way of thinking, I make no doubt but there are others to whom my treatment of *Le Clerc* may seem severe: as pointing out the mistakes of an author with freedom will always carry this appearance to those who have entertained a partial fondness for him.

To abate a little of this partiality therefore, I find myself under a necessity of speaking my sentiments yet more freely of this learned man (I mean, as a commentator of the holy Scriptures, for I consider him in no other view) before I proceed to defend myself from the particular charge brought against me.

I am very ready to acknowledge, that Le Clerc was a general scholar; vastly studious and laborious; and of a genius turned for criticism: and in all these respects excellently qualified for an interpreter of Scripture, had he come to it with less fondness for some favourite notions, and had he applied himself steadily and closely to it. But it is well known what a variety of Bibliothèques and other books he was employed either in the writing of, or publishing; which must have kept him, perhaps for years together, from any steadiness of application to the great work he had undertaken (and which was enough in all reason to take up half the life of any one man) A new Translation, Paraphrase and Commentary on the whole Scriptures of the Old Testament. In fact we find that the many other works wherein he was engaged, kept the world in expectation, from the publishing the first book of these commentaries to the last, for no less than eight and thirty years. For though the book of Genesis was published in 1693, and two years after the whole Pentateuch: it was still thirteen years before the next volume on the historical books came out; and there too the paraphrase was dropped (though as useful a part as any, but perhaps the nicest and most difficult) and only a translation with a commentary given. And it was three and twenty years more (viz. 1731) before his imperfect work on the poetical and prophetic Books was published, when he was now reduced, in a manner, to a state of childhood; and had unfortunately left these books for the last, which are by far the most difficult, and would have demanded all the vigour of his younger years.

So little did this celebrated critic regard his own good rules for study. For in his *Ars Critica* he cautions against mixing studies of a different kind: and advises that whoever would understand a book well, should read and study it without interruption, till he became a perfect master of his author's style and subject: which he will never be (says he) by taking up the book for a while, and then dropping it again, and so resuming it by fits and starts; as experience shews.\* How then could he think, that he

\* *Ars Crit.* p. 1. Cap. v. Sect. 3. Illa nimium interrupta lectio fastidium parit, quo fit ut tandem præ tedio eos scriptores depona-



should be able to put out a work of this kind without many imperfections in it; if he made it only a work by the by.

There is another fault of Le Clerc's, which (with the leave of his admirers) I must insist on. He carried his notion of the ambiguity and uncertainty of the Hebrew language and the style of Scripture to an extreme: so that in passages which appeared to contradict an opinion he was fond of, there was nothing plain enough or precise enough for him. I have given several instances, and could have given many more, of this ill-placed hesitancy. Which whatever shew of modesty it may put on, is in reality as much a vice in literature, as it is to be too dogmatical or assuming. And it is no uncommon thing to see both extremes united (like the avarice and prodigality of a Cataline as described by Sallust) in one and the same character. To put us off with a non liquet where the sense is plain and the construction regular; and this in maintenance of a paradoxical opinion highly improbable in itself, and disallowed by a great majority at least, if not the generality of divines both Jewish and Christian; inconsistent with the general drift or tenour of the Scriptures, as well as with numerous texts of Scripture taken in their most natural and obvious sense (for such was the point I was disputing with him) is a conduct not to be defended.

I am persuaded no one had it less in his intention than Le Clerc to give advantage to the Romish cause. And yet were the Scriptures so obscure, ambiguous, and uncertain as he sometimes represents them; what a temptation or excuse would here be to look out for another rule of faith, a subsidiary one at least!

He was himself, I believe, a sincere Christian: and yet what a stumbling-block did he lay in the way of the

mus; quos si continuo, et sine interpellatione legissemus avide evolvissemus. Huc etiam accedit, quod cum quisque scriptor suum habeat characterem, suamque eloquutionem, opus sit tempore et perpetua lectione ut ei adsuescamus. Hoc enim fieri nequit subinde deposito et in manus denuo sumpto scriptore; quod experientia nos docuit, et omnes, quicumque idem tentabunt, docebit.

credulous



credulous and half-learned among the adversaries of christianity, by this unhappy treatment of the Scripture language!

“It is highly probable”, says one of these gentlemen (the mouth of a society of gentlemen, if we may believe his title-page) who seems to have known little of the Hebrew, but what he guessed at by dipping into Le Clerc, “that the original biblical Hebrew never was any intelligible language, or capable of being translated with any justness or certainty, into any other language. And whoever will read the learned Mr. Le Clerc’s dissertations upon the Hebrew tongue, and manner of interpreting these writings, will hardly avoid being of this opinion”.

He proceeds, for fear we should mistake him, to explain himself further.

“It seems indeed most probable to us that the biblical Hebrew never was any national living language, articulated by vowels, distinguished by the necessary conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, persons, and tenses, so as to make it a common intelligible way of speaking. It seems rather to have been originally contrived as a cypher, intended to be read and understood only by the priests” \*. Yea! here is the great grievance—Take away these priests; for they are cyphers too (if I may be suffered to play upon the word) nay worse than cyphers in the opinion of these gentlemen: for they do all the mischief—

I am far from desiring to load Le Clerc with the follies and extravagancies of these men; to which he may have given occasion unawares, but for which themselves are answerable. Nevertheless I could heartily wish, that this popular writer had not said so many disparaging things of that language wherein the divine oracles are conveyed to us: and which, though, like others, it has its ambiguities and anomalies (for where is one that has not?) is nevertheless in the main a regular and a beautiful language; like the works of God, at least in its original

\* Sacerdotism displayed. p. 62.

ginal contrivance, wonderfully simple and yet artificial ; and very intelligible to those who will be at the pains to study it. And as we have now to facilitate this study, a Hebrew Concordance adapted to the English Bible ; a great and useful work, which I mention with pleasure therefore upon this occasion ; I am in hopes that (through the divine blessing) it may bring both the Hebrew and the Bible into a little more repute with us, and lead the sober and the studious to examine for themselves.

But to return to *Le Clerc*. What I would say is this, that it is no wonder, if one who had entertained such a notion of the imperfection of the Hebrew tongue ; and who moreover could not, or would not allow himself sufficient leisure for the study of those sacred books he had undertaken to explain, should be guilty of numerous mistakes in his interpreting them ; at the same time that I allow him to have shewn a great sagacity in many places ; for I am far from envying him his due praise. In the passage just now cited from the book of Proverbs, we are beholden to his skill in natural history or philosophy, as well as in the Hebrew, for the right interpretation of it. But this and a thousand other proofs of his skill can never raise him to the infallible chair, if there be any such in criticism ; nor make every thing he touches pass for gold. If therefore men will rest implicitly in the sense of this, or any other commentator, from an opinion they have entertained of his learning and his judgment, they will unavoidably espouse his errors : and how shall we do to set them right, but by shewing them the faults of him whom they have chosen for their master ?

The candid reader will see the reason I had for this long preamble, and excuse it ; when he has perused what I am now going to lay before him, viz. a note of the reverend Dr. Law, Archdeacon of Carlisle, &c. in the last edition of his *considerations on the Theory of Religion*, p. 69. Where after a long quotation from *Le Clerc's* Commentary on Job, Ch. xix. he proceeds thus—

“Whoever is disposed to weigh these reasons fairly,  
“may find them more at large in his (*Le Clerc's*)  
“notes : and will perhaps see small ground to suppose  
“with

“ with the learned author of Crit. Diff. p. 216. that  
 “ when he wrote them he had begun to lose his wits. I  
 “ must confess, I am sorry to observe so candid a writer  
 “ as Mr. P. betraying the same contempt of that great  
 “ man. (whose comments, I freely own, give me the  
 “ most instruction, and to whom notwithstanding his  
 “ mistakes I apprehend the learned world is infinitely  
 “ obliged) as too many of our countrymen have done  
 “ whenever they mentioned him, and hope I shall be ex-  
 “ cused for taking notice of what seemed not the most proper  
 “ method of destroying the authority of that learned and  
 “ ingenuous foreigner (whose writings are the most effectual  
 “ guard against this way of judging, and thereby pro-  
 “ bably have given so great offence to some amongst  
 “ us) but rather an insult on the memory of one, who  
 “ would not have returned the like had he been able to  
 “ defend himself; and which treatment was by no  
 “ means necessary to recommend this gentleman’s per-  
 “ formance; for which (notwithstanding some excep-  
 “ tionable passages, particularly that in the same section,  
 “ p. 225. of the Gentile nations being left for ever in the  
 “ state of death: a doctrine which to me appears more  
 “ harsh than any that has been advanced by poor Le Clerc)  
 “ I take the present opportunity of paying him my most  
 “ sincere acknowledgments,” — &c.

Thus it is that the learned archdeacon has been pleased  
 to reprimand me—with such a mixture of chiding and  
 compliment, that had it come from my own archdeacon,  
 who has some authority over me, and for whom I have  
 a respect, I think I should not have taken it very kindly  
 of him.

Let me begin with the exceptionable passage here pro-  
 duced, and censured for its harshness, viz. of the “ Gen-  
 “ tile nations left for ever in the state of death”. My  
 Words are these, p. 225, 4to. “ I freely own I can  
 “ make no sense of this passage any other way, than by  
 “ understanding the word ham-methim, the dead, as  
 “ intended to characterise the Gentile nations, who  
 “ having no part in God’s covenant of redemption,  
 “ but being estranged from him by their idolatries and  
 “ wicked-



“ wickedness, were to be left for ever in the state of death, so  
 “ as never more to rise to happiness at least; whilst God’s  
 “ people on the other hand hoped for a joyful resurrection  
 “ and a future state of blessedness, wherein they should  
 “ praise God for ever, in the most extensive sense of that  
 “ phrase.”

The learned writer, before he had condemned this passage for its harshness, should have recollected whether the same charge would not lie against that account which St. Paul gives of the Gentile nations, Ephes. ii. 12. For the apostle has expressed himself in terms that are full as strong as mine. “ At that time (says he, that is, the time when ye were yet Gentiles, v. 11.) “ ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, “ having no hope, and without God in the world.”

Here seems to be just the same distinction made as mine, and upon the very same ground: so that my words can stand in need of no further justification. However Dr. Law might have observed, if he had not been too hasty in his censure, that I had expressed myself with some caution too; and supposed these Gentile nations “ estranged from God both by their idolatries and wickedness.” I had no intention to set any other limits to the mercy of God, than those which he himself hath set; or to exclude from it particular persons of the Heathen world, who under all their disadvantages might nevertheless have been eminent for their virtue, and some of them have entertained very honourable notions of the supreme Being. But when we speak of nations, or people, and their different states; I apprehend, it is to be understood of the generality; without regard to the particular exceptions, which the great Creator of us all, and he alone, is qualified to make, and will make, no doubt, agreeably to his own unerring wisdom and goodness.

As to the distinction of ham-methim and ha-chajim, or the living and the dead, as applied to persons subsisting in another state; which was the notion I was speaking of; (for, by the way, I was not here advancing any

any opinion of my own, but enquiring into the belief of the ancient Jews concerning a future state; if any one doubts whether there be a sufficient ground for such a distinction in Scripture; I think I could produce other texts to corroborate the proof I had given from Ps. 115.

I shall detain the reader but with one or two taken from a book where one would least of all expect to find them, according to the notion some have entertained of that book; I mean, the Ecclesiastes. Thus Ch. ix. 4. The wise man is there deploring the wickedness of his own times, arising in a great measure from men's perverse reasoning about the ways of providence: because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily: and "because all things come alike to all. This is an evil (says he, v. 3.) among all things that are done "under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea "also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and "madness is in their heart while they live, and after "that (they go) to the dead," el ha-methim.

It follows, ci mi asher jechubbar el col ha-chajim jesh bittachon? "For who is there that hopes he shall "be associated to all the living?" (that is, after death) "nay but a living dog (say they) is better than a dead "lion. For the living know that they shall die, but "the dead know not any thing". And so he goes on in "his usual way, to represent the wrong reasonings of "these men (if we may call it reasoning) for several verses together, along to v. 10 inclusive; "whatsoever "thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou art going."

For this a peculiarity in this book of Solomon, that there is more of the Mimesis in it than in any other book of Scripture; as well as longer periods, and a thread of discourse not easily traced, nor to be understood without much attention.

But whoever considers closely this whole passage from v. 4 to 10. will see that it is a description of the soft and the voluptuous life; of such as believed a Deity indeed, but (like Epicurus) imagined him to be as soft and idle

as themselves : and that he had given them this present life merely that they might enjoy it to the full, and catch at every object of delight within their reach, and even as far as their might or power would bear them out : for that there was nothing after this life either to be hoped or feared. This is the plain drift or purport of these six verses.

As to the construction I have given to v. 4. I think I could easily justify it to the Hebrew reader. I see no other construction indeed that is natural and regular, and that carries a good sense with it, beside this, *Ci mi asher jechubbar el col ha-chajim jesh (lo) bittachon ?* Nam quis est cui sit spes se associarum iri ad omnes viventes ? For who is there that has any hope or trust that he shall be associated to all the living ? that is to the general assembly of them, the *am yisrael*, if I may borrow a word from St. Paul. Heb. xii. 23.

If the pronoun *lo, ei*, be not understood between *jesh* and *bittachon*, the *h* put before *mi* (and this is frequently understood) gives the same sense, and is exactly according to the Hebrew idiom *Ci lemi jesh bittachon asher jechubbar el col ha-chajim ?* There is a *Keri* and a *Cetib* here indeed, or a various lection, and the *Cetib* is *jebuchar* not *jechubbar*. But the difference is only this, whether we say *associatum iri*, or *cooptatum iri*, which comes to the same thing.

Dr. Law will not find this interpretation in Le Clerc, nor perhaps in any other of the commentators : and yet it is likely enough to be the right, for all that ; for it is the grammatical one.

As for what follows, *Ci le-celeb chai hu tob min ha-arjeh hameth*. *Quinimō canis vivus, &c.* “Nay but a living dog is better than a dead lion”—the very turn of this sentence shews it to be proverbial ; and a wicked saying got into the mouth of some who had thrown off all regard to fame, as well as all belief of another life : for the import of it is plainly this, that “it is better to live “with shame, than to die with honour.”

This, surely, could never be the sentiment of Solomon himself, who had before told us, (ch. vii. 1.) that, “a good name



“is better than precious ointment”; and the day of death, (to one who has acquired it) better than the day of his birth.” We must conclude it therefore to be a shameless vulgar saying got into the mouths of the libertines of those days: and as it was notoriously known to be so, there was no need to preface it with a they say, which is often omitted in works of this kind, and that with elegance. So St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 32.) “let us eat and drink” (without adding, as says the Epicure) “for to morrow we die.” And I chuse this instance the rather, because the speech here put into the mouth of the libertine by Solomon for six verses together is so very like it; that had it not been extant for a thousand years before, one might have taken it for a sort of paraphrase upon this Epicurean text in St. Paul. But there were, and are, and will be men of this way of thinking in all times: And these words of St. Paul are but borrowed from the prophet Isaiah, ch. xxii. 13. And he who would see this passage in Ecclesiastes further paraphrased (if I may so speak) may find it very beautifully done in the book of Wisdom, Ch. ii. v. 1.—“For the ungodly said, reasoning with themselves, but not aright, our life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy,” &c. If any one at his leisure will compare this passage in the book of Wisdom, Ch. ii. from v. 1 to 11. with Eccles. 9. from v. 5 to the 10th. he will find that the personated Solomon throws great light upon the true one.

Shall I give another passage from this book, in proof of the notion I am speaking of? Let it be Eccles. vii. 12, 13. “Wisdom is good with an inheritance, and (by it there is) profit to them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge, is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.” There needs no long comment upon these words. One who is but a little conversant in the books of Solomon must know what he means by wisdom: And he tells us here, comparing wealth and wisdom together, that though there be a great advantage arising from their union to such as see the sun, or live in this world; because one is a defence, and the other a defence (and there-  
fore

fore both together must needs be a much greater) against the common evils of life: yet the superior excellency of wisdom consists in this Jechajah beyaleha, "It shall give life to its owners." If we can doubt what he means by giving life, let Solomon himself explain it, Pro. iii. 18. where he tells us that "wisdom is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her." alluding, no doubt, to that tree of life in paradise; whence Adam was excluded, "lest he should eat and live for ever."

Here then is a plain evidence of this people's belief of another life; nay more of their hopes of a recovery of that life and immortality which had been forfeited by the first man's disobedience; if they applied their hearts to wisdom in the well-known Scripture-sense of that word. For what other possible meaning can be put upon these texts compared? Nay is not the object of our Christian hope described in just the same terms? Rev. ii. 7. 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.'

But now to return—Let us compare this saying of mine (of the Gentile nations, &c.) more harsh, it seems than any thing that has been advanced by Le Clerc; with the favourite notion of that author, so often repeated in his commentaries, in season and out of season, that the Hebrews had no knowledge of a future state. Were they entered into a solemn covenant with God then?—declared a holy people—styled the sons of God—with no other intent, but to teach them that they must expect their happiness in this life; and to blind them against all other views and hopes? This seems harsh indeed—and too absurd for any man who is not himself blinded by prejudice.

The learned Archdeacon speaks of other exceptionable passages in my book. He would have obliged me much, if he had pointed them out. It is no wonder if there be some errors; but there they must remain till made known to me: for it is a question whether I shall find them out myself.

But let me now proceed to consider what gave occasion to this whole Note of Dr. Law's.



And here, I think, I have reason to complain, that this gentleman cites my words and censures them, as if they had related to that long passage he has produced from Le Clerc's commentary; or at least to some part of it. Whereas whoever looks into my book and that commentary, will see that they relate to something said before, at the distance of two whole columns from this: and which I might say again, one would think no man in his wits could say. I there produced his own Latin words: and it is necessary to repeat them here; that so the reader may judge for himself.

Job. xix. 25 Le Clerc translates thus—*Novi ego liberatorem meum vivum, et posthac fore ut in pulvere stet.* “I know that my deliverer liveth and that hereafter he shall stand in or upon the dust.” And being told us, that by the deliverer, is meant God: he proceeds to comment thus. *Ait autem Jobus fore posthac ut liberator in pulvere stet; quod perinde est ac eum victurum, καὶ ἀθανάτου, quia homines qui stant in pulvere vivunt; opponuntur enim iis qui in pulvere tecti sunt, et in sepulcro jacent.* In English thus—“Job says that hereafter his deliverer should stand upon the dust; which is the same thing as if he had said that he should be alive, according to a known figure called an anthropopathia, because men who stand upon the dust, live: for they are opposed to those who are covered in the dust, and lie in the grave.”

This is as close a translation as I can give the words; and the reasoning here implied I had represented to be thus. “A man that stands upon the dust is alive (to be sure) for he is not buried in the dust: therefore when it is said of the Deity that he shall stand upon the dust—the consequence is clear”—viz. that he is living, because he is not dead and buried. Can any other consequence be drawn, or any other sense be put upon this passage? Will the learned Archbishop vindicate it? can he say that it is not senseless and absurd to the last degree? And therefore I am still surpris'd that it should come from a man of so good understanding as Mons. Le Clerc, unless it were after he had lost his memory and understanding, being quite worn



worn out by age and sickness and hard study. For this it is well known was his case for some length of time before he died. And his Editor tells us somewhat of it in the Preface to this volume \*. So much the more care therefore should his editor have taken, who professes himself the author's friend †, not to let so odd and ridiculous a passage to remain here, which one little blot might have effaced, and which could not without great negligence have been overlooked, as it stood by way of comment upon the most noted text, perhaps, in all the bible. The knowledge he had of his friend's utter incapacity to revise his own works, should have engaged him, surely, since he undertook it, to bestow the necessary pains about it; especially where the subject was so interesting and important, as that of a translation and commentary on the books of Scripture. So that here it is, in reality, that the reflection falls at last; viz. on poor Le Clerc's anonymous friend the Editor, where I had placed it.

“Poor Le Clerc”—says this gentleman in Italicks, with a true compassion for him, I make no doubt it but very ill-timed, if it was intended (as I suppose) to point out an expression of mine of the same import, and to intimate as if I had used it not in a way of pity but contempt. For surely I had a much more natural occasion to pity him than Dr. Law. And therefore he had little reason to call it “an insult on the memory of one who would not have returned the like, had he been able to defend himself.”

Unable as he is to defend himself, there are those who want no inclination to defend him; and they are welcome to do so if they please, from any thing that I have said of him. But before they set themselves to recriminate, I hope they will consider well, whether there be really any provocation given.

Vixit equidem, sed ita vixit ut nullum amplius laborem scribendi aut meditandi ferre queat. — And just after — Nihil itaque, prohi dolor! ab illo in posterum expectare debet respublica literaria.

Lector S. P. Dominicus Auctoris, &c.

*Why yes: in the way that I have treated him, I have taken (it seems) "a method, but a very improper one, to "destroy the authority of that learned and ingenious foreigner"——*

*As a foreigner, as learned, as ingenious,——in every of these respects I acknowledge that he was entitled to fair and candid usage——And wherein have I used him otherwise? I have cited his arguments and objections in his own words: nay; this long passage itself (all but a few lines of it) which Dr. Law produces in his note. I have done more, I have translated it: can he say that I have translated wrong? I have done more still, I have taken it to pieces, and shewn that these reasons (as Dr. Law calls them, and would have us weigh them) are no reasons at all, nor have the weight of a feather in them; and that Le Clerc mistook the main question.*

*Had he been the most learned man in the world, I neither could nor would have paid him more respect, if I thought him in an error. For would this gentleman have us to submit to his, or any other learned man's authority for the sense of Scripture? Authority! what is it? or who gave it him? I have tumbled the commentators a good deal myself, and have been often led into a labyrinth by them: from which, if any thing has extricated me, it has been a close attention to the original text. Here then is my last resort: for I love to trust my own eyes, as far as they will carry me.*

*Had authority swayed with me I should not have ventured to oppose some of the greatest of our own divines (as much as I reverence their judgment) when they came against me. In the section on Sheol, particularly, I have done so, but without naming them. Being aware indeed, if I had, that this same spectre of authority might have been turned against me like the Gorgon's head; or dashed full in the face of my readers, and stiffened them against all the impressions that the best arguments of mine could make.*

*If the learned Archdeacon therefore thinks that I had taken a prejudice against Le Clerc, merely for the freedom with which he writes or judges; he mistakes the matter quite:*



quite: and I thought I had expressly obviated any such suspicion. For surely I must be very unreasonable to take so much liberty myself; and deny it to any other man. And yet this is what he seems to suspect; for why else should he put in *Italics* that part of Le Clerc's apology for himself, for differing from the most of commentators in the sense which he had put upon this noted text of Job. viz. that "in our enquiry into the meaning of a Scripture passage we are not to regard the number of suffrages, because men are apt to follow and transcribe each other—sed tantum rationum rationem habendam—but that we should be governed by the reasons of things alone." Most certainly—But what is this to me; unless it be that it justifies my conduct by Le Clerc's?

Nevertheless to shew how ready I am to retract what may give offence to any worthy or good man, I have struck off the passage taken notice of by Dr. Law as exceptionable from my book. I shall do more than this for Mons. Le Clerc, and I do it with pleasure, as it is what none of his admirers, that I know of, have attempted to do for him. I shall endeavour to set the passage in a better light, that so this celebrated author may be in his wits again.

As a sight of Dr. Law's book put me under a necessity of re-examining this passage, I considered it over and over, to see if with any little alteration I could extract a better sense from it. And I really think I have found what poor Le Clerc meant; and what his friends may find perhaps, if they consult the manuscript again. Probably then instead of *vivunt* the author had written *vincunt*; and so the *victurum* is to be understood as a participle from *vinco*, not from *vivo*. And then his meaning might be this; that to stand upon the dust, is as much as to say that he shall conquer; and here the anthropopathia comes in a little more intelligibly and aptly: *quia homines qui stant in pulvere vincunt, opponuntur enim iis qui in pulvere tecti sunt et in sepulcro jacent.* The opposition had been better, if he had said, that those who stand upon the field of battle, and are victors, are opposed to those who are killed or put to flight. But as it is expressed,



expressed, he might probably intend the same as Grotius. *Postremum in campo stare est victoris*——For though Grotius is no more without his errors than Le Clerc, yet he usually mistakes like a man of sense.

And now I hope I have made very sufficient and honourable amends to Mons. Le Clerc, and given full satisfaction to his friend Dr. Law.

I confess I have sometimes thought that there was good sense, and good advice in a certain Rabbinical saying, which might pass for one of Pythagoras, for it is to be understood in the allegorical way——“Throw a little salt upon your lamp: it will burn the brighter, and the stranger”. Nevertheless, I had much rather that my salt should be less sparkling, than that it should be too corroding.

It remains that I return the learned Archdeacon my acknowledgements for the favourable opinion he has expressed of the book in general. Nay I thank him too, and very sincerely, for acquainting me and the publick with what he apprehended to be amiss in it. I never thought myself too faultless for reproof, nor yet too old to amend. Only I could wish he had not charged me with an Insult, which neither my nature (I think) nor principle would allow me to intend. I hope it cannot be esteemed an insult to point out the faults and errors of a writer, upon subjects of importance, whether he be living or dead. If any one think it is; Le Clerc himself shall disculp me: for he has a very good saying which he uses in his own defence, when he was in just such a situation as mine——*Nec nocet veritas mortuis, et multum prodest vivis.* (Epistolæ Crit. p. 80.) “Truth cannot hurt the dead; and may be of great advantage to the living.”——

But having thus dispatched what I thought due to myself: it is time to turn the reader's attention to another subject, that may be more agreeable both to him and me.

Amongst the questions relating to the book of Job, there are two that seem to be of importance, and yet are seldom and but slightly touched. viz. How this book came to be admitted

admitted into the Jewish canon, and what was the most likely time for it to be so. It is not possible to determine. If we can get but a little light towards the determining these two questions; it may afford some satisfaction to those who have a just esteem for the book.

I believe there are few, who are not wedded to an hypothesis, but will readily acknowledge that the well-known passage of Ezekiel, Chap. xiv. where Job is ranked with Noah and Daniel, as alike eminent for his piety, affords a high probability that the book of Job had been admitted before this time into the collection of their sacred books. For that there was such a collection made from time to time; and that the other books of history prophecies, &c. as they were written and approved, were added to the books of Moses, and held as sacred or canonical; appears evident to me from the Scriptures themselves.

As these books then were to the pious Jews the only consolation that was left them, when their city and temple was destroyed, and themselves led captive to Babylon; there is no question but they would do their utmost to preserve some copies of them. Nor could this be very difficult, considering the favour which the prophet Jeremiah had obtained with the conqueror, and which he would certainly employ to this good purpose. In short, had they not been thus preserved, they must for ever have been lost both to the Jews and us. For nothing can be more ridiculous than the story of Ezra's renewing them.

Their sacred books then accompanying them in their captivity; it is natural to think, that next the books of Moses (and the book of Psalms, perhaps) none would be more eagerly read, than a book so finely adapted to their circumstances, so fitted to amuse, instruct, and comfort them as this of Job. And who more likely to recommend it to their perusal than the prophet Ezekiel himself? their fellow-captive; of the sacerdotal race, and so most likely to have their sacred books in his possession; endued with the spirit of prophecy in his captivity; and set by God himself as a watchman to the house of Israel\*, to preserve

\* Ezek. iii. 17. and xxxiii. 7.

them from the infection of idolatry, and keep them steady to the worship of the one true God; till his providence should bring them back again to their own land, at the time that was foretold.—

This, surely, is the most probable account that can be given of that high reputation Job was now in with those captive Jews. They revered Noah as their great forefather; and Daniel had acquired an extraordinary fame for wisdom, and obtained great favours for them from the king of Babylon. But what had Job to recommend him, beside the example of his patience, and the admirable lessons of this book, which to a Jew, who had not then forgot his language, must appear in all their native strength and beauty? And if they believed as I do, that the book was written by Job himself; none need to wonder at the high esteem they paid him.

But still the difficulty remains; how or when this book, neither written by an Israelite nor of one, nor yet connected with any part of the Jewish history, should be received into the Jewish canon.

The solution whereof seems to be this: that as the canon was made up not only of the legal, historical, and prophetic books, and the book of Psalms, but of others that carried a moral instruction with them: The book of Job was considered as of this last class, and for its excellency received into the canon, after obtaining the approbation and authority of some one or more of their prophets strictly so called, that is, persons extraordinarily inspired: for this it must have had, or it would never have been admitted.

Whoever reads the Scriptures with attention will find that it is here they lay the stress of their own authority; I mean upon the divine inspiration of those persons who were employed in the writing and compiling, or else revising and approving them.

Of the inspiration of Moses and the prophets, or the writers of the prophetic books, there can be no question. And with regard to the historical books, it is remarkable that where any of the compilers of the Scripture-history is named, we always find his title annexed



as a prophet or a seer, which are terms equivalent; or at least something added there or elsewhere to distinguish him as such; and this without any exception that I know of.

Thus we are told, 1 Chron. xxix. 29, 30. "Now the acts of David the King, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer: with all his reign, and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries"—that is, the neighbouring kingdoms, with which he was concerned.

These words, surely, describe a full history of the acts of David; (allowing for the concise way of recording things used in those ancient times) and not merely the touching some parts of his history by the bye as it fell in with their own prophecies; which (I think) is Le Clerc's notion. He owns indeed that a great part of the history which we now have in the books of Samuel, might be taken from the books of these prophets here named: but then we are not to think (says he) that these were the mazcirim, or *ἱστοριογράφοι*, historiographers of David; since others had the office of mazcir, as appears from 2 Sam. viii. 16.\*

But how weak is this, to argue from an obscure word upon a point of such importance! I call it an obscure word; because no one knows what this officer called mazcir was, nor is his office any where described in Scripture. And if the authors of the Septuagint translation turned the word by *ἱστοριογράφοι*, they translated by mere guess, as in many other places: nor is their authority here, no nor that of the Latin vulgate, who copied after them, of any weight. The word itself signifies barely a remembrancer: and therefore some suppose this officer to have been a sort of master of requests; others, as Bp. Patrick, the chancellor of the kingdom.

\* See Le Clerc on 1 Chron. xxix. 29.



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behalf of the person that offered, and a memorial to that person of the one almighty Being, whom alone he was to worship; a memorial in short of the covenant betwixt God and his peopl., which was evermore to be renewed upon their minds; and therefore, the salt of the covenant, as it is remarkably called, was never to be forgotten, but was to be always mixed with these oblations.

Levit. ii. 13. It is for this reason that he who burns incense is called (Isai. lxxv. 3) *mazzin lebonah*, one that "makes a memorial of incense", as it is literally explained in the margin of our Bibles. It is well known that this was a way of preferring their prayers, sup-

learned a man as he was by inserting and adopting it under the root *zakar*.

Schultens (says he) affirms, that the primary sense of this word stands in a brisk vigorous flavour, scent, or fragrance. Hos. xiv. 7. But it signifies little what Schultens says, or any other learned man, without proof; and much more against plain evidence.

There is but one primary sense of the word *zakar*, which is, to remember. And this may easily be traced through all the hundred and eight variations of the word, enumerated and produced in this Concordance. So that it might, with just as much reason be said of the Latin word *secundari*, that the primary sense of it stands in a brisk flavour, &c. as of the Hebrew *zakar*.

The text Hos. xiv. 7 upon which the stress is laid, is so far from being to the purpose, that to translate there *zicron ejus tanquam vinum* (or wine) Libani — is to introduce a needless tautology, the same thing in a manner being said just before of the same subject, *Forriach liban Libani, odor ejus tanquam Libani*. Forriach, and not *zakar*, is the proper Hebrew word for *odor*, a smell; and why should we confound one word with another? On the other hand nothing can be more apt or beautiful, than to compare the memory of a thing for its sweetness, to that of delicious wine, such as the wine of Libanus, or of the wine itself. *Zicron ejus tanquam Libani, memoria ejus tanquam vinum Libani*.

It could wish therefore that Mr. Taylor here had paid more regard to his own excellent design (expressed Sect. 4. of his Preface), viz. to fix the true, natural, primary sense of the Hebrew roots, that so the language may not appear vague, ambiguous, and arbitrary, than to have dazzled us with the authority of Schultens, who I believe in this particular could scarce find anything even in his beloved Arabic to support him. There is scarce a word in the Bible, the primary sense whereof is more fixed than this of

plications



applications and thanksgivings: and hence those beautiful allusions to it in the New Testament, “thy prayers \* and thine alms (saith the angel to Cornelius) are “come up for a memorial before God” (Acts x. 4.) And so Rev. viii. 4. “And the smoke of the incense “with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before “God”.

This same word is used likewise for celebrating Jehovah in hymns of prayer or praise. Thus David, when he had brought up the ark, and fixed it in his own city\*, appointed a number of the Levites le-hazcir, to commemorate, and “to thank and praise Jehovah the God of Israel” to supplicate (that is) and to praise or celebrate him by his great name of Jehovah the God of Israel, of which he himself had declared, “this shall be my name “for ever, and this my memorial (Heb. zicr-i) from “generation to generation †.” And so the prophet Isaiah calls upon those whose office it was thus to supplicate and praise Jehovah, Ham-mazcirim eth Jehovah, al domi lacem——“You that are the mazcirim of Jehovah (appointed to celebrate his name in hymns of prayer and praise) “keep not silence, and give him no “rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a “praise in the earth ‡.”

All this seems to shew, that this office, whatever it was, had respect to religion and divine worship: and probably the president over these mazcirim might be called by way of eminence, ham-mazcir.

But however this may be, an invincible objection to Le Clerc’s notion, seems to be this; that we are never referred to any acts or books written by these mazcirim, nor are they once named upon any such occasion.

No, nor yet Pere Simon’s Sopherim, or Scribes, which he talked so much of. The Scripture history was compiled with quite another view than the journals of the Persian or any other Eastern monarch (which is ano-

\* 1 Chron. xvi. 4.

† Exod. iii. 15.

‡ Isaiah lxii. 6, 7.

ther thing Le. Clerc has weakly urged by way of precedent) and required quite another sort of writers.

In the text above-cited we are expressly told that the acts or history of David was written by three prophets, the later finishing (we may suppose) what the former had begun.

And so of Solomon, we learn (2 Chron. ix. 29. "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer?" And we find this same Iddo was employed, together with another prophet Shemaiah, in writing the Acts of Rehoboham, the son and successor of Solomon, 2. Chr. xii. 15.

The practice thus begun, then, would undoubtedly be continued. And though we do not find after every King's reign the name of the prophet or prophets that wrote his acts; yet we must conclude them to have been written by some prophet, because no writer of their history is any where expressly named (unless my search has deceived me) but that his title is given him as a prophet, or it appears at least from other places of Scripture, that he was such.

I take this to be a point of some importance as it is the Scripture testimony to its own authority; and justifies St. Paul's assertion of the Scriptures in general, that they were "given by inspiration of God"—And again that we are "built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles"—Not the least intimation given us in the New Testament of books written either by the mazcirim or the sopharim; but in general, that we are to regard them as inspired, or as having a prophetic authority. And the same is here intimated to us in these books themselves; for why should they refer us to such an one a prophet, and such an one a seer, for the acts or history of such a King, and be so careful to inform us of the quality of the writer; but to draw from us a proportional respect,

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

† Ephes. iii. 20.

and make us receive it with that reverence which is its due?

It may be objected, perhaps, that Ezra who is supposed to have been (and probably was) the compiler of the books of Chronicles, where these references are found; has himself only the title of has-sopher or the scribe, and is not called a prophet. It is true he is not; but then neither is he any where named as a writer of any of the books of Scripture: So that this does not annul the foregoing observation. And yet it is probable that he was the writer of the book that bears his name, as well as the compiler of the books of Chronicles; and therefore probable too, that he was something more than a scribe. Or however this be, there were prophets then in being to give their approbation and their sanction to his history. So that there is no necessity of supposing here any exception to the general rule.

But I did not mean to enter upon an examination of the Scripture canon. What I intend is only this, that it seems plain from the references above taken notice of, that the prophets were their historians.

And this appears further confirmed by the great mixture of history which we find in some of the prophetic books. For what should we conclude from hence, but that these prophets must have been the writers of that part of their history? Thus, for example, when we see among the prophecies of Isaiah several chapters of history, in the same words (in a manner) as we find them in the book of Kings: Can any thing be more natural than to conclude, that he was the writer of this part of the history; though it had not been told us, as it is expressly, of one of their kings with whom this prophet was contemporary, "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziab first and last did Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos write." And again of another of them, † "Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiab, and his goodness, behold they are written in the Vision of Isaiah the prophet the son

• 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

† 2 Chron. xxxii. 3.



of Amos; (the very title of *Isaiab's* prophecy, for it is called his vision) "and in the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel" — most probably, the book of Kings which we now have.

*Isaiab* prophesied in the days of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Abaz*, and *Hezekiah*, kings of Judah, as we learn *Isaiab* i. 1. That he wrote the acts of the first and the last of these kings we are here expressly told: and therefore that he wrote those of the two others likewise, there can be little room to doubt. The account we have of these four reigns then in the book of Kings, we have reason to conclude to have been added to the history by this prophet.

There is yet another, and a very considerable proof that the prophets were their historians, in that the books of history and prophecies went anciently by the same title of the Books of the Prophets; with this only mark to distinguish them, that the historical books were called the former prophets, and the prophetic the later.

And this seems to be the reason, that in the citations made in the New Testament, we never hear of any historical books as distinct from the others; but all is comprized under the two classes of *Moses* and the *Prophets*; or at the most under three, viz. *Moses*, the *Prophets* and the *Psalms*. The *Psalms* being at the Head of a third class of books, which for want of another name, and being of a miscellany nature, were called by the ancient Jews *Cetubim*, or *Scriptures* in general: that is, holy *Scriptures*; for this was their meaning. And so the Greek translators express the title to the full, by calling them *αἱ προφῆται*. And it is observable that, in the New Testament, scripture and holy scripture, or the words *γραφή* and *αἱ γραφαί*, are used indifferently, when speaking of the books in this collection; and it is said of all of them, without distinction, that they were "given by inspiration of God" 2 Tim. iii. 16.

The third class then, or *Cetubim*, where stands the book of *Job*, we may safely conclude to have had the same sanction with the others (whatever might be the reasons

reasons for thus classing them) and that they could not have been admitted into this collection without a prophetic authority.

And in fact we find, that after the spirit of prophecy was withdrawn from this people, that is, after the time of Malachi, their last prophet, the scripture canon was sealed up, and no more books added: though some very useful and instructive books were afterwards written, as particularly Ecclesiasticus, in the lashon ha-kodesh too, the holy tongue, the Hebrew. And yet the Jews never admitted this into the canon; though the Romanists at present do, as well as some other books of far less merit.

I suppose it appears from what has been said, that the Book of Job, whenever it was received into the Jewish canon, must have had the authority of some prophet for its admission.

Let us go on to the other enquiry——What was the most likely time for its reception. And I believe most of those who have considered the matter with attention, will agree to fix it to the time of Moses, of Solomon, or of Hezekiah.

If we suppose, with the counterfeit Origen, that it was given the Israelites by Moses: he met with it, probably, when he sojourned in the land of Midian, a country not very far from that of Job, among the collections of his father-in-law Jethro; who appears to have been a person of great wisdom, and could not want a curiosity therefore for books so full of wisdom and instruction as this of Job. And then if (as the same writer adds) Moses made a present of it to his people lying under the hard bondage of Egypt: or if he reserved it to support them during their wanderings through the wilderness: the book must have been of admirable use to them in either of these circumstances. But as this is merely a conjecture, unsupported by any proper evidence; and as we have no intimation of any thing of this kind either in the Books of Moses, or any other book of Scripture: this seems to call upon us to look out for another hypothesis.

And

*And the next most likely time for the book of Job to have made its appearance among the Israelites, was in the days of Solomon. Not for any likeness of style, which some have fancied to be between this book and those of Solomon; (for the style is very unlike) but because that wise king would be very inquisitive after every curiosity of this kind, and had all the advantages of procuring them that any king could have. His commerce by sea was very extensive: and what will not an extensive commerce supply? The neighbouring princes from all quarters either came to hear his wisdom; or courted his friendship by the rich presents which they made him. If the book of Job was presented to him by one of these, what pity is it that the giver of so fine a jewel should not have his name recorded!*

*Or shall we suppose it among the presents made him by the Queen of Shebah? she came from a country not far off from Job's, and with the same curiosity as others, led by the fame of Solomon. And a lady so inquisitive after wisdom was as likely as any to have this book in her possession: and might well esteem it the most suitable and the most valuable gift that could have been offered to the wisest of men. She came to "prove him" (says the text) "with hard questions". If she brought this book with her; I suppose, many a knotty question would arise from the perusal of it worthy of Solomon to resolve. But let us not wander far in these airy regions of imagination—*

*All that can be reasonably concluded here is, that this wise king was very likely to have so celebrated a book, as this must needs have been from its first appearance, in his keeping: but whether by his authority and that of the prophets of his time, it was then added to their sacred books, is another question—Here too is an absolute silence; and we have not so much as a hint in scripture to proceed upon. We know not indeed when the works of Solomon himself were first introduced into the canon: but whenever this was done, if the book of Job was found among them, this too was in all probability the time of its admission.*



Let us go on then to the reign of Hezekiah. And here we have a little light to go before us. For I think it appears from Prov. xxv. 1. that the writings of king Solomon came at this time under a review.

It is said, 1 Kings iv. 32. that Solomon spake three thousand proverbs—Whereas the whole collection that we now have in the book of Proverbs, scarce amounts to one thousand: and even these appear to have been collected at different times. At Ch. x. the title of the book is repeated, as is usual before a second part. “The Proverbs of Solomon, a wise son maketh a glad father” &c. And again at Ch. xxv. begins a new set of proverbs thus prefaced, “These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.” The Hebrew word heytikú, here rendered copied out, hath two significations: the first, and most proper is, to make to grow old, that is, to perpetuate. For the noun precisely signifies old without decay. And in this sense it is applied by Daniel to the everlasting God, whom he calls yattik jomin or jomaia, the ancient of days \*. The other sense of the verb is to transfer—that is (still keeping to the original idea) to make to pass from an old state to a new. Thus children “weaned from the milk” (Isai. xxviii. 9.) are in the next words, and in a similar phrase, called yattiké misshadaim, “transferred from the breasts.”

Taking the word heytikú here then in both these significations, there could not be found a more apt one to express what the men of Hezekiah did, if they were appointed to revise king Solomon’s writings, or collect his genuine sayings, and select from them what were proper to be added to this book of Proverbs. To take them from the common store, and to insert them into the sacred canon, was both to transfer and to perpetuate them.

For I suppose no one will affirm, that every thing which Solomon spoke or wrote, especially considering his frailty in his later years, should be received as sacred, without passing the examination of some one or more of God’s prophets. And the high esteem which the prophet

\* Dan. vii. 9. xiii. 22.

Isaiab was now in, will not suffer us to doubt, but that he was at the head of those men of Hezekiah (as they are called) or the persons commissioned by that pious king for this purpose.

Hezekiah, as a lineal descendant and successor of king Solomon, was heir to all the treasures of wisdom which his great ancestor had left behind him. And how could they be disposed of better, than by being put into the hands of Isaiab, and others joined in a commission with him, amongst whom might be Hoshea and Micah (no ordinary prophets, and they both flourished in the golden days of Hezekiah) to select from them what was proper to be inserted into the sacred code? The Books of Solomon then, we have reason to conclude, were at this time fixed as sacred or canonical. Or if there had been a collection of his proverbs, (as there seems to have been) approved and authorized before: yet now there was a new addition made to them, upon this solemn revisal; and probably the two other books of Solomon, the Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, were at the same time added to the canon.

There is an obscure hint of this kind in the Talmud, where amongst a heap of insignificant things, an old tradition of some moment is here and there preserved.

"The Talmudists" (says Mercier, \* one of the best Hebrews of his time, and who was very conversant with these books) "in Bava bathra, Ch. i. are of opinion, that Hezekiah and his company wrote the books denoted by the symbolical word פְּסוּקֵי חִמְשֵׁי שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר, viz. Isaiab, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes—Into which opinion they seem to have been led by what is said Prov. xxv. 1. These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out."

\* Talmudici in Bava bathra, cap. i.—Putant Ezekiam et ejus catum scripsisse libros quorum symbolum est vox פְּסוּקֵי חִמְשֵׁי שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר, nempe Isaiam, Proverbia, Canticum canticorum, et Ecclesiastem. In quam sententiam adducti videntur ex eo quod prenotatur initio cap. 25. hujus libri. Insuper hæ sunt sententiæ Solomonis quas exscripserunt viri Hezekiæ, &c. See Merc. in Proverb. sub initio.

It may be proper to acquaint those who are strangers to this sort of literature, that these symbolical words were made up of the initial letters of words. And thus every letter in the word *IMSK* or *Jimsbok* (as they pronounce it with the points) is put to mark out a particular book, the title whereof begun with that letter, viz. as it is here explained, *Isaiab*, *Mesbalim*, *Shir-bashirim*, and *Kobeletb*; the Hebrew names of the four books, *Isaiab*, *Proverbs*, *Song of Songs*, and *Ecclesiastes*.

These Talmudical doctors then had an obscure tradition delivered down to them of something done in *Hezekiah's* time relating to these books of Scripture. But they evidently mistook the meaning of it, if they supposed the Books to have been written by *Hezekiah* and his men; instead of being then collected, and revised, or solemnly approved, and added to the sacred canon. For this, no doubt, was the truth of the case; and such a tradition might have been conveyed down from remote times, in the very symbol here specified. For it appears that the use of these symbols was very ancient with this people; how ancient we know not. The worthy dean of *Norwich* *Dr. Prideaux*, who has deserved so well of every lover of the Scriptures, in his *Connection* (Pt. 2. B. 3. pa. 184, Octavo) hath given us a remarkable instance of it in the word *MaCaBI*, put by *Judas Macabeus* as a motto in his Standard, and made up of the initial letters of a sentence taken from the *Song of Moses* on the miraculous passage of the red Sea (*Exod. xv. 11.*) *Mi Camoca Ba-elim Jehovah? Who is like unto thee among the Gods, O Jehovah?*

This shews the custom to have obtained 160 years or more before Christ. And the reader, if he please, may see another example of the same kind, probably as old, or older, than this; which, as it has some relation to a passage in my book, I chuse to give it in the note below \*.

The

\* I have said, pa. 273. (Quarto Edit.) that שִׁלָּה (*Gen. xlix. 10.*) in old Jacob's celebrated prophecy of the Messiah, should be pro-



# The P R E F A C E.

IV.

*The use of these symbols then being very ancient, if the first letter in this word Jimshok stand for Isaiah, it seems to intimate to us the part which this great prophet had in the revising and fixing the authority of these books of Solomon.*

*But*

pronounced Shilah, and signifies *her child*. And I am still of opinion that this is the most probable meaning of the word. And so says D. Kimchi, the completest master of the Hebrew language, perhaps, of all the Rabbins. Both Jews and Christians acknowledge the Messiah to be here intended: But how to explain the name, is the difficulty.

The Chaldee paraphrast, Onkelos, certainly took it for one of those symbolical words that are made up of initial letters: for he explains it of the Messiah, *de deliah hi malcutha, whose is the kingdom*: which turned into Hebrew will be thus, exactly answering to the word SHILAH, שֵׁשׁ-לֹו הַמְּלוּכָה, *She Jesh-Lo-Hammelucah*. Literally, *Qui est ei regnum, who to him is the kingdom*. For this is the usual turn of the Hebrew phrase.

The interpretation here given of the word may be near as old as the first use of the Chaldee paraphrasing; which commenced of course soon after the return from the Babylonish captivity.

That it was older than the Septuagint Translation, seems plain from hence; that these translators give it to us curtailed, omitting the last word *hammelucah*; for fear, perhaps, that living in Egypt and amongst their Gentile masters; the word *kingdom* might create a jealousy that would turn to their disadvantage. At least this is the best reason that I can think of, why they should turn the word Shilah by *ἀποκείμενα*, *cui repositum est*, or *τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ*, *quæ reposita sunt ei*; answering to *She-lo*, or *She-jesh-lo*: leaving the thing itself (*viz. hammelucah, the kingdom*) to be understood, or to remain a secret with themselves.

But this again, probably, gave occasion to the irregular pointing of the word, according to which it is now pronounced Shilo', not Shilah. The Masorites (I suppose) had been used to hear it thus pronounced; and therefore thus they pointed it. There are other instances of the same kind, and some pretty remarkable. Nevertheless their pointing is in the main very right and regular: and they have thereby undoubtedly transmitted to us the true pronunciation of the Hebrew language; and every attempt to alter it, seems bold and hazardous.

One thing we cannot but observe from this instance; that whatever liberty the Masorites might take in pointing, or those that were before them in pronouncing; yet they dared not alter a letter of the Hebrew text. It does not appear to me (I own) that they ever wilfully corrupted it. We see the original letters are still preserved in the word Shiloh, שִׁילָה; though in after times, from the occasion I have mentioned, or some other, they were led to

*But I confess, it appears more probable to me, that the book of Job might be here meant by the first letter of the word Jimsbok.*

*For why the book of Isaiab should be ascribed to Hezekiab and his men, when it was the work of Isaiab alone; or why the taking it into the canon should be commemorated by such a symbol, when it must follow of course from his being a prophet eminent and confessed; or why the book of Hosea should not as well be added to this symbol, since he lived and prophecied in Hezekiab's time—are questions difficult to be resolved. But if the book of Job, together with the three of Solomon, were at this time taken into the canon, it is very easy to see a reason for perpetuating the memory of it by such a symbol as this.*

*The learned will object, no doubt, that the name of Job is written with an Aleph, not a Jod, as the first letter; which is very true. But then they know too, that this Aleph never was pronounced, and that the name was always spoken, as it is now, Jjob or Job. And as these symbols were delivered down among their oral traditions, for many centuries before ever they were written; this word, as it passed from mouth to mouth,*

*give the word a different pronounciation, and a different pointing, than that which naturally belonged to it.*

*Though the interpretation given to this word by the Chaldee Paraphrast (according to the conjecture here offered) be undoubtedly very old, and hath a plausible appearance: there seems to me to be one objection to it, which is this. I think the Messiah in old Jacob's time had not yet been described as a king. The first revelation of this sort, was that made to David, of a Son that should sit upon his throne for ever. From thenceforward he was expected as a king or prince: but without forgetting his other character of the Redeemer of Mankind, and the sufferings he was to undergo on this account, which were foretold from the beginning. They are these two different states of his humiliation and exaltation that make the subject of so many amazing prophecies in the Book of Psalms, and the other prophetic Books: and must needs create great perplexity to the Jews, who have rejected, and do still reject, the only true key to them, in the life, the death, the resurrection and ascension of the blessed Jesus, and that kingdom with which he is invested by his heavenly Father—an everlasting kingdom; and therefore, to be sure, a spiritual one.*

must necessarily have been pronounced Jimbok, even supposing the book of Job the first here meant. So that it is no wonder, if when their traditions were collected and put into writing, to preserve them, a century or two after Christ, they should write this word just as they had been always taught to pronounce it, with a jod and not an aleph; and so mistook the first letter to mean Isaiab and not Job.

This seems to me no improbable account of this matter. And here then we have found a time, and a very fit one, for the book of Job to be admitted into the Jewish canon: and this, I think, is as low down as we can go. If any chuse to place it higher, I have no objection to it. It might be admitted in the days of Solomon, or even of Moses, for any thing that appears to the contrary in the book itself—And they who think so, will have much more reason on their side than those who place it lower; and who would divest it of that historical truth, and venerable antiquity which contributes to render it so highly valuable and instructive.

If it be still asked, why Isaiab or any other prophet should allot to the book of Job a place among the sacred books, when it might have been preserved among the common ones, and read very usefully: I might reply, perhaps with good reason, because he held it to be inspired, and the work of Job himself. There is a section upon this subject in the following dissertation (viz. the tenth of Part 1.) where the reader may find something to entertain his curiosity, if not to satisfy his judgment.

But whether we ascribe the authority of the book of Job to Job himself, or to any other prophet; a prophetic authority it must have had. And the place where it now stands in the Hebrew Bible, seems to shew that it was admitted upon this revisal of the writings of Solomon. For it is placed there immediately after the book of Proverbs, which being at this time only revised and augmented, kept the place it had before in the sacred code.

And



*And the next place was allotted to the book of Job, now first admitted into this collection \*.*

*That Solomon collected many books for his own use, there is no question. We are told at the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes, that "of making many books there is no end"; and of course therefore of furnishing libraries there can be none. But whatever books the curiosity of Solomon had brought together, the book of Job alone (it seems) was found worthy of a place among the sacred ones. And it is well for us, that we have these obscure hints remaining (since we can have no better) of the time of its admission. A time, than which none could be more honourable for him, nor more unexceptionable in all the Jewish history. In the reign of one of the best and most religious of their princes; and when their greatest prophets flourished; respected, honoured, and consulted by their king. And moreover, when the schools of learning as well as religion, through the royal favour, were raised to such a height, that, according to the Talmudical doctors (to give it in their own hyperbolical phrase) you might search the land from Dan even to Beershebab, and there was no such thing to be found as vulgus terræ, meaning an illiterate person †.*

*If any one should object after all, that a Jewish tradition is but a weak foundation to proceed upon, as there are many of them false and trifling: I might reply, that a distinction ought undoubtedly to be made; and that a tradition delivered down by such a symbol as this, has the appearance (at least) of something important, beside that it carries upon it a mark of great antiquity: and moreover, that what is said (Prov. xxv. 1.) of the part Hezekiah took in having the book of Proverbs*

\* In the Septuagint indeed, or Greek translation, it is put immediately before the book of Psalms: a respect (probably) being herein had to the great antiquity of the Book. And so St. Jerome places it: and so it is placed in our Bibles.

† See Mercier on Prov. xxv. 1. who quotes the Talmud for it, Tractatu Sanhedrin: and adds this sensible reflection of his own; non ignorabat probus et pius rex, institutionem literarum et doctrinam pietatis fontem esse.

revised, and some additions made to it from King Solomon's remains; gives a strong confirmation — a sort of scripture-testimony to the tradition conveyed by this symbol.

There is a still further confirmation of it to be had from the Book of Ecclesiastes, which might well deserve to be enlarged on, would the limits of this preface allow of it. For if we may judge from internal characters (and we have no other light to go by, where history is silent, and the opinions of the learned are so various) I think it will appear probable to those, who consider the matter with attention, that this surprizing Book called Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, and delivered to us in the form of a sermon, is indeed a sermon preached by Solomon, but long after his death. I mean, that it was composed out of Solomon's remains, and had this form and title given it by those that were appointed to revise and publish them. Amongst whom the prophet Isaiah, if I mistake not, hath left us a little mark of his own hand writing at the conclusion of the Book, for those who are capable judges of it.

Indeed the thing in the main, and when examined without prejudice, almost speaks itself. For the Sermon plainly ends with a repetition of the text (as we may call it) or the same words with which it begun, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, all is vanity". Ecclef. xii. 8.

What follows is an addition by the Editors of this remarkable Sermon, giving some account of the Preacher and his wisdom, v. 9, and 10. Of themselves, the collectors of his writings and his sayings, v. 11. Of the caution with which Books are to be used, v. 12. and the drift or design of this Sermon before us, in the last two verses. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God," &c.

Scarce any thing can be more clear at first sight than that this is in the nature of an Epilogus, added by those who had the revision and the publishing of this Book of Solomon's. And who could these be, but the same that revised his Book of Proverbs? So that we have here  
again

again a strong mark or proof in favour of the symbol abovementioned. Which is all that I mean to observe from it at present.

Since the first Edition of this book, having had the opportunity of reading some of the volumes of Lord Bolingbroke's works, I observed that in his first Essay to Mr. Pope (Vol. 3. Quarto) treating of the right and wrong application of Figures, his Lordship shews a great inclination to set aside the interpretation given to the story of the brazen serpent (Num. 21.) considered as a type.

This, as it affected a passage in my book; but much more as it affects a passage in the Gospel \*, I had the curiosity to transcribe; and shall here give it the reader with a few remarks.

" One rule (says his Lordship, page 434.) ought to  
 " be observed inviolably, viz. of admitting or rejecting  
 " figures, as they are justified or not justified by their  
 " application. Their application is their criterion."  
 Again, " Figures that typify nothing, are nothing, or  
 " they are worse than nothing; they are so many lies,  
 " since they pretend to denote something real, when no-  
 " thing real exists. How the sight of that brazen  
 " serpent, which Moses erected in the desert, cured  
 " the Israelites of the venomous bite of real serpents,  
 " I know not. Miraculously, say our divines. Just as  
 " other images work cures at this day, say your divines.  
 " Be this as it will, the figure typified very determinately  
 " what God intended it should typify when he said, pone  
 " eum pro signo. But when your divines and curs  
 " agree to make it a sign of Christ lifted up on the cross,  
 " and crucified; he must be very cabbalistical indeed,  
 " who can discover the same determination. Real ser-  
 " pents had caused a real plague. A brazen serpent was  
 " the figure that signified this event to be over. It signi-  
 " fied therefore, at the same time, that the Son of God  
 " himself was to come into the world near two thousand  
 " years afterwards, to deliver mankind from the allego-

\* John iii. 14, 15.



“ rical plague of sin, which he did not most certainly  
 “ cause. How reasonable is one, how absurd the other  
 “ application of this figure! How necessary is it therefore  
 “ to examine scrupulously the application of every figure,  
 “ that we may not be imposed on by false appearances?”

I could wish the noble writer had examined a little more scrupulously into this matter: for then he could not have given us such a misrepresentation of the thing.

In the first place the Latin Vulgate seems to have misled him. And I suppose he was too polite to trouble himself with the Hebrew literature, or even the verbal Latin translation of the Hebrew text. For he might have found it there, not pone eum pro signo, but pone eum super vexillum: as Ar. Montanus has well rendered, sim otho pal nes.

Next, his Lordship seems to have mistaken the meaning even of the Latin Vulgate translator. For it is probable that he used the word signo here in a military sense; viz. for an ensign; as this best answers to the Hebrew word nes—the proper word for signum, as it means a sign or token, being in the Hebrew נס oth.

Further, the noble writer supposes this plague (as he calls it) to be over, before, or upon the erecting of this standard. “ Real serpents, (says he) had caused a real  
 “ plague. A brazen serpent was the figure that signified  
 “ this event to be over.”

Here again, that polite negligence, which is so observable in his Lordship’s writings, would not suffer him to consult so much as his English bible, For he might have found there, very evidently, that the plague was not over when this brazen serpent was erected; and that the very design of erecting it was, that it might be an effectual remedy for those bites of serpents, and thereby put an end to their plague. Num. xxi. 8, 9. “ And the Lord said  
 “ unto Moses, make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon  
 “ a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that  
 “ is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And  
 “ Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole;  
 “ and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any  
 “ man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived.”

Can

Can any thing be more plain, than that this symbol was erected as a remedy; and not merely as a sign that the plague was over? for it was not so, when this was first erected.

But now comes the demonstration, that this figure could not typify Christ — “ A brazen serpent was the figure “ that signified this event to be over. It signified there- “ fore at the same time, that the Son of God himself was “ to come into the world near two thousand years after- “ wards to deliver mankind from the allegorical plague of “ sin, which he did not most certainly cause.”

It is a very easy, and a common thing in controversy, for an adversary to mistake his adversary's meaning, and then proceed to triumph in confuting of his own mistakes— The adversaries of Scripture are often guilty of this error.

His Lordship here supposes the serpent to represent Christ; and so apprehends and argues wrong from this mistake. I think I have shewn it to be much more probable that it was the nes, or pole, that represented the Redeemer; who by his death upon the cross defeated the old serpent, who is said to “ have the power of death,” and restored us to the hopes of life and immortality.

We have here then in Christ crucified, a remedy against death, the effect and punishment of sin; as the Israelites had in this symbol. And so according to L—d B——'s criterion, the figure is justified by the application.

As our Saviour is never represented by the symbol of a serpent any where else; but is plainly prophecied of under the figure of a nes or standard to be erected, to which all nations should resort, (Isai. xi. 10.) as the allusion (John iii. 14) consists only in the lifting up, and the salutary effects of it to true believers: “ As Moses lifted up the “ serpent in the Wilderness, so must the son of man be “ lifted up,” it follows, “ that whosoever believeth in “ him should not perish, but have eternal life.”—And sure, no man will say that the Israelites were healed by believing in the serpent. And so again, John xii. 32. “ And I if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all “ men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should



"should die." In a word, as it is the erected standard that draws all men to it, and Christ is prophecied of as such a standard, to be erected in due time: I had good reason, surely, to suppose, that Christ was here represented, not by the serpent hung up as a trophy, but by the nes or standard on which it hung. And this the rather, because by his death upon the cross he is said to "have destroyed" "him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;" (Heb. ii. 14.) "that old serpent" (as he is called, Rev. xii. 9.) who by the success of his temptations first brought death into the world.

I would not have any one think this a peculiar notion of mine: old Dr. Jackson is of this opinion in his exposition of the Creed. And if the authority of the Jewish Rabbins be of any consideration, these likewise plainly favour this interpretation of the thing. For as they love to amplify a little in their comments on the Scripture miracles, they tell us this nes or pole on which Moses hung the serpent, was no other than a tree planted in this Wilderness by Seth the Son of Adam, being a branch or slip of the tree of life in Paradise, plucked from thence and given him by an angel. They say, moreover, it was from this very tree that Moses cut his rod with which he wrought such wonders.

What I meant to observe from this fable is only this, that according to the notions of these learned Jews, the life-giving virtue was in the nes or standard, and not in the serpent that was hung upon it. And one may say, perhaps, of some of these Jewish fables, what Strabo said of those of Homer: that as wild as they may seem, they had some foundation however in truth.

I have supposed, pa. 304 (and given some reasons to shew it probable) that Moses, when he erected this object of their wonder and attention, "explained to them its" "mysterious meaning." The very expression used (Numbers xxi. 9.) seems to intimate as much. For where it is said, "if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived"—the word *behold*, signifies not merely to gaze or stare upon a thing, but to look at with attention, to consider, to contemplate.



plate. And what should they consider or contemplate, unless Moses had furnished them with something more than the bare figure to contemplate on?

It may be worthy of our observation, that the very same word *hibbit*, is used in the well known prophecy of Zechariah (ch. xii. 10.) cited John xix. 37. "They shall look on him whom they pierced" — with understanding and attention here then; for they are described as beholding it with great sorrow and repentance.

It is a conjecture of some learned men, that Satan tempted Eve in the Shape of one of these fiery flying Serpents, that here made such havock among the Israelites; *ban-nechashim ha seraphim* (as they are called in the original) and that Eve, from his bright appearance, took him for a seraph, in another sense, viz. an Angel of light: and so was the more easily seduced. What St. Paul says, 2 Cor. xi. 14, of "Satan being transformed into an angel of light;" seems to give some countenance to this notion; for I think we read of no instance of this kind in all the bible, unless we allow of it here. And yet St. Paul seems to speak of it as a well known thing. So that probably this might be the current interpretation of this difficult piece of history in St. Paul's time. In obscure matters, which we are under no obligation to penetrate, there is no need to be positive. But if it were the same sort of serpent that now infested the Israelites which the devil had before made his instrument to tempt Eve: here is a still closer application of the figure, and we see a great propriety in it. This image of polished brass (very aptly representing the bright and burning colour of this sort of serpent) looks backward to that old serpent that triumphed over our first parents credulity, and so brought sin and death and diseases into the world: but is here triumphed over in his turn. And this again looks forward to another and a greater triumph of the second Adam, or seed of the woman (as he is called, Gen. iii. 15) who brought an effectual remedy for all the evils introduced into the world by sin and Satan, and came to destroy his empire over mankind.

Every

Every way, methinks, the figure holds; and is justified by its criterion (as the noble writer calls it) or the application.

I have said (pa. 305. Quarto Ed.) that I would “not lay any stress upon that assertion of Justin Martyr, that the nes or standard on which this brazen serpent hung, bore the figure of a cross; as supposing it only a conjecture.” And yet it must be owned that the conjecture is a very natural one; because a transverse beam at top, if the serpent were coiled round it, would shew him to the most advantage.

But what shall we say, if there be something of this great mystery, I mean the death of the cross; (the very hinge upon which our religion turns, and of such importance in St. Paul’s account, that he determined to know nothing in comparison of it) interwoven into the first great promise that was given of a redeemer?

It is what I have not seen observed, indeed, by any of our divines or commentators; and therefore I propose it with some diffidence. And the reader must judge for himself whether there be any weight in it or no.

It is an observation of St. Jerome of prophecies in general, *Omnis prophetia ænigmatibus involvitur*, that “there is always something obscure and ænigmatical in them.” If it be so, there is an obvious reason why it should be so, viz. that men may not undertake to fulfil them of their own heads; but that the hand of God may appear as visible in the completion, as prediction. However in this view a prophecy fulfilled is a riddle solved: the obscurity is cleared up by the event, and leaves no longer any room to doubt of the intention of the riddle-maker.

In the sentence passed upon the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. we have these words: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed, and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Taking the serpent to mean Satan, and the seed of the woman Christ, which is the usual interpretation; we see here, that as the head of the one, so the heel of the other was to be bruised.



Now if we recollect all the kinds of death that we have either heard or read of; I believe we shall find none where the heel is bruised in so remarkable a manner, as in crucifixion. For the feet being here laid one over another, and with a nail driven through them violently bent towards the cross, the heel must of necessity be greatly hurt or bruised.

Here then is something literal (at least) in this first prophecy of our Redeemer. And if it were only so far explained to our first parents as to let them know that all their hopes of pardon, and a restoration to the divine favour, depended on this seed of the woman, who by suffering death for them was to procure them a resurrection to life and immortality: what a light does this throw upon the whole subsequent history? We then see the reason of the early institution of sacrifices; and the typical design of them appears with great clearness. The faith of Abraham, and his ready obedience to that hard command of God to sacrifice his only son, that child of promise, if he concluded this to be the great sacrifice that was to be offered for the redemption of mankind; has no longer any difficulty in it to be accounted for: And the ram caught in the thicket was a very proper intimation to him that the typical sacrifices were yet longer to continue. Nor could this act of Abraham be drawn into example so as to countenance human sacrifices; since there was but one such sacrifice to be offered, and this must be of God's appointment.

In a word, it will make way for a clearer understanding all the following prophecies, wherein the sufferings of the redeemer are described, and some of them with the most surprising exactness.

But if I was to enter upon a consideration of the prophecies of scripture, I might go near to make this preface longer than the book.

I shall take notice of one more however, because it has a relation to the same great promise of a Redeemer (Gen. iii. 15.) which the adversaries of Christianity of late have been so willing to set aside.



St. Paul's remarkable comparison, by way of antithesis, between Adam and Christ\*, whom he calls the second Adam or Man, is well known. But I do not know that the commentators send us to the Old Testament for any thing that may serve to justify the great Apostle in this comparison. And yet I think there is a passage in the prayer of David (1 Sam. vii. 19. and 1 Chron. xvii. 17.) which shews that the Messiah was expected under this very character.

I confess I have not seen it taken notice of in this light by any of the interpreters or commentators: and therefore I must let it rest upon its own evidence, after representing the thing as fairly, and as briefly as I can.

Upon David's pious resolution to build a house for God; which as appears from his way of expressing himself, he intended should be very magnificent: The prophet Nathan was so pleased with it, that he concluded God would be pleased with it too; and "said to the king, go and do all that is in thine heart: for the Lord is with thee." 2 Sam. vii. 3.

He was in the right to think that God would be pleased with the thing: but it seems the time for it was not yet come. And therefore Nathan is sent the next day with a message from God forbidding it; but at the same time with a very gracious promise to David, the chief part whereof we have from v. 12 to the 16th, in these words.

V. 12. And when thy days shall be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: If he commit iniquity I will chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of Men.

15. But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

\* Rom. v. 12.—1 Cor. xv. 21.

Here are plainly some things that relate to Solomon: and some things of a higher nature, relating to a throne and a kingdom that should be established for ever.

The repetition of this last particular is very observable—

“I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.”

Again, “and thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

It was this that struck king David, as may be seen from the prayer he offers upon this occasion.

For as soon as Nathan had delivered his message, v. 17.

“According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.” We are told

immediately, v. 18. “Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

V. 19. “And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while to come; and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?

It is this last clause I must dwell upon a little, Is this the manner of man? &c. There is no interrogation in the Hebrew, but a direct assertion; *ve-zoth torath ba-Adam, Adonai Jehovah*—literally, *et ista lex Adami, Domine Jehovah*: This is the law of the Adam (or the Man, (for the  $\pi$  is demonstrative and emphatical) O Lord Jehovah.

David could not but observe from the whole turn of the message, that it was prophetic. It related to his seed after him that should proceed out of his bowels, whose kingdom should be established. “He shall build an house for my name,” (says God) this Solomon did, “and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.” Not in Solomon’s hand surely; this could never be the meaning—nor could David apprehend it so.

In the next verse Solomon’s defection is foretold, but with a gracious promise however that God’s mercy should not depart from him, as “he took it from Saul:” but that the kingdom should be still continued to his posterity.

And



*And lastly, it was foretold him in the strongest terms, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."—*

*If the Jews either of former or of later times have interpreted this of a temporal kingdom; or such as was intended for their nation only, to raise them to the height of glory: they have not only gone contrary to fact, but to the voices of their own prophets; who speak of the kingdom of the Messiah, as everlasting, and universal, and therefore (to be sure) a spiritual one. "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." \* says Daniel, of the "Son of Man"—an appellation (by the way) not very different from that of Adam or the man.*

*The following prophets are always good interpreters of those that went before them. And as the prophet Daniel here saw the son of man invested with an everlasting kingdom, so David, to whom the first prophecy was made of an everlasting kingdom, as soon as he heard the great promise made him, "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee, thy throne shall be established for ever:" concludes that this could be no other than the kingdom of the son of man, or the second man, the promised Redeemer. Zoth torath ha-Adam Adonai Jehovah. "This surely O Lord Jehovah, thou great and everlasting God, who madest and governeest all things" (for the several repetitions of Adonai Jehovah in this prayer is very observable) "This can be no other than the law, the fixed decree concerning that other Adam or Man, that hath been so long promised us;" that seed of the woman, who is to bruise the serpent's head; that seed of Abraham, in whom all nations of the earth are to be blessed; that seed of Isaac, Jacob, Judah, the Shilah spoken of, to whom the gathering of the people is to be; and now declared to be the son of David, whose kingdom shall be established for ever.*

\* Ch. vii. 14.



We see how apt this sense is: and if this be not the meaning of *zoth torath ha-Adam*; there is no other that I can perceive that is at all natural, or even tolerable. They who would see how much the commentators torture a text (I mean, if they can do it without feeling a little of the torture themselves) may consult them upon this text, if they please.

The speech or prayer of David, as it is carried on in the following verses, is such as one might naturally expect from a person overwhelmed as it were with the greatness of the promised blessing: for it is abrupt, full of wonder, and fraught with repetitions.

V. 20. "And now what can David say more unto thee?" What indeed! "For thou Lord God, knowest thy servant"—Thou knowest the hearts of all men, and seest how full my own heart is.

V. 21. "For thy word's sake," (or for the sake of former prophecies) "and according to thine own heart;" (from the mere motive of thine own infinite wisdom and goodness) "hast thou done all these great things to make thy servant know them?"

I now perceive, says this wise king, the reason of those miraculous providences which have attended me from my youth up—"taken from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep—" and conducted by thy mighty hand through all the dangers and difficulties that lay before me, till thou madest me "ruler of thy people Israel:" And shall I distrust the promise that is now made me? No, Thou art the Lord Jehovah, and thy word is truth.

I have borrowed the words of Nathan, v. 8. "I took thee from the sheep-cote," &c. and set them in this light, which seems to me to be the true one.

But I shall go no farther with David's words here. Only if it may seem to some that I have laid too great stress upon the words, *zoth torath ha-Adam*, v. 19. (though I must again declare, I can see no good sense at all of the words any other way; much less a sense so reasonable as this,) I shall desire that they would attend to the parallel place in the history, as it is given us, 1 Chron. xvii. 17. And there they will find it thus—

"And

“And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God,  
 “for thou hast also spoken of thy servant’s house for a great  
 “while to come, and hast regarded me according to the  
 “estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God.”

So the translation, indeed, very unhappily and poorly—  
 What a pitiful recognition is here made of a blessing so im-  
 mense!

The words in the original are, U-reithani ce-tor ha-  
 Adam ham-mayelab—literally, *Et respexisti me secundum*  
*dispositionem Adam illius futuri*—or, *superni*. The word  
 mayelab admits but of one of these two senses; and you may  
 take which you please. As a substantive indeed, it is used  
 for a step or stair, or an ascent: but this sense can have  
 no place here. As an adverb it signifies *suprà*, and that  
 both with respect to time and place: viz. forward, or  
 future, with respect to time; so 1 Sam. xvi. 13. me-  
 bajem ha hu vam-mayelab, “from that day and for the  
 “future,” (we have the same expression, 1 Sam. xxx. 25.)  
 And above, with respect to place, of which the instances  
 are common and need not be produced. The meaning there-  
 fore must be this—“And hast regarded me according to the  
 “order or disposition of the future Adam, or the Adam  
 “from above.” Thou hast regarded me, that is, in the  
 order of thy providence, as one from whom the second Adam,  
 or Man, the Redeemer is to descend.

You may turn the Bible from the beginning to the end,  
 and you will not find Adam ham-mayelab put for a man of  
 high degree: \* much less ha-Adam, the man, as it is  
 here. One certain person is plainly denoted: And who can  
 that be, but the same which St. Paul speaks of, Rom. v.  
 14. where he saith, the first Adam was *τύπος τῷ μέλλοντι*, a  
 type or figure of the future, that is, of the Adam ham-  
 mayelab? (The words *μέλλω*, and mayelab indeed are so  
 near alike both in sound and sense, that it is not at all un-  
 reasonable to suppose the Greek word derived from the He-

\* A man of high degree in the Hebrew is *אִשָּׁר* *Ish gadol*, *Ish*  
*nicbad*, &c. And tho’ this distinction betwixt Adam and *Ish* be not  
 always observed; yet we find two or three instances in the Psalms,  
 of sons of Adam and sons of *Ish* opposed and distinguished as men of  
 low degree, and high. See Ps. xlix. 2. and lxii. 9.



brew.) Or if you take *mayelah* here in its other sense; then *Adam ham-mayelah* will be, (in the very identity of phrase, viz. an adverb used for an adjective) *ἐκ τῶν ὑψωμάτων*, *supernus homo*—And who can that be, but the same person, of whom John Baptist in the New Testament saith) *ἐκ τῶν ὑψωμάτων*, “He that cometh from above, is above all?” And our blessed Lord himself, “Ye are from beneath: I am from “above.” † “The first man” (says St. Paul) “is “of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from “heaven.” ‡ Where can we find better commentators than these upon any passage of the Old Testament?

St. Paul then, who was well read in the traditional explanations of the prophecies of the Old Testament, had (I make no doubt) this passage; and perhaps others that are as yet undiscovered by us, in his view; when he drew that parallel betwixt the first and second Adam.

It were to be wished the Jews would take this great Apostle for their teacher; one bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, (a Doctor still in high repute with them) and who knew more of their traditions, probably, and could distinguish the gold from the dross much better, than all their Rabbins that have lived since the destruction of their city and temple by the Romans.

I think we may correct an error of the Cabalists from the light which is here given us by St. Paul: and shew them from this instance, that though their traditions, some of them, may be founded in truth, and carry an important meaning; yet there is no depending on the interpretation which their wise men put upon them.

The word *אדם* *ADAM*, is one of those symbolical words (which I have before spoken of as in use among the Rabbins) made up of the initial letters of Adam, David, Messiah. And the interpretation of it that hath long obtained, is in the transmigration-way, the *gilgul han nephasboth*, or *neshamoth* (as they call it) the revolution of souls, viz. that the same soul, in the course of its revolution, was to inform or animate these three persons, first Adam, then David, and last of all the Messiah.

But take it in the words of Herm. Witsius (*Egypt*

\* John iii. 31.

† John viii. 23.

‡ 1 Corinth. xv. 47.



tiaca, pa. 15) Certè Cabalistarum opinio est, animam primi hominis voluendo pervenisse in corpus Davidis regis, et ex Davide voluendam in corpus Messie: idque significari per literas quæ sunt in voce  $\overline{\text{DIN}}$ , quarum unaquæque integram dictionem constituat,  $\text{A}$  Adam,  $\text{D}$  David,  $\text{M}$  Messias,

This interpretation may, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be as old as the sect of the Pharisees; or at least, as their adopting the Pythagorean notion of the transmigration of souls. But the symbol itself might be much older, and have a more important meaning, though in length of time forgotten. And as I have shewn, that David, in this prayer of his, speaks of the Messiah, or Redeemer, as another Adam; the Adam from above, or the future Adam; but now plainly foretold, as to descend from Him: such a truth as this might be very naturally trusted to this symbol for conveyance, the prophet David being here the link that joins these two together. And this seems to be the most natural interpretation of this symbol.

I shall only add, that the Chaldee Paraphrast evidently favours the interpretation I have given of those words of David, 2oth torath ha-Adam, 2. Sam. vii. 19. For his exposition of them directly points at the Messiah. It is thus — “Thou hast spoken of thy servant’s house,” *le-yalma de-athe*, “for the age to come:” *ve-da chezia li-b’né anasha*, *Jehovah-Elabim*, “and this is a vision for the sons of men, O Lord God.” And so the Latin translation in the Polyglott, *Et locutus es etiam super domum servi tui in seculum quod venit: et hæc est visio filiis hominis Domine Deus.*

Every one knows that by the age to come they meant the days of the Messiah. So that the meaning of the Paraphrast seems plainly this — “Thou hast spoken of thy servant’s house even to the age of the Messiah: and this is a vision therefore, or a fresh prediction, of that great and universal blessing to the sons of men.”

As I have been led into these reflections by an unskilful remark of Lord Bolinbroke’s on a passage of the scripture-history: I cannot but take notice with concern of the great contempt with which his Lordship every where

where speaks of the historical part of the Old Testament, and the "incredible anecdotes" (as he calls them) or the miracles recorded there; — as if every thing miraculous were presently to be discarded as incredible; or as if a revelation from God could be given without some such attestation; or that such a revelation were either needless or useless. — Whereas on the contrary, nothing can be more useful or desirable than such a revelation — nor more reasonable than to suppose that it should be attended with such extraordinary attestation — nor more easy to conceive, than that God should work a miracle.

As it would be to little purpose that we should endeavour to recommend or to illustrate any particular book of scripture, when the authority of the whole is thus brought in question: if I add a few pages here to obviate this unreasonable prejudice (and a prejudice, I doubt, that is but too prevailing) I hope it will not be thought beside the purpose either of this preface or the book.

By the scornful air some gentlemen give themselves upon this subject, one would think it were a self evident proposition, or a sort of natural dictate, that a miracle is a thing impossible. But if this were so, it were impossible that any false pretences to them could so easily impose on the unwary. The dictate of nature seems to be, that God can and doth interpose in an extraordinary manner upon great and extraordinary occasions. The unnatural sentiment of an Esprit fort is, that if he can he never does. None but an Atheist, surely, or one who resolves all into fate and necessity, can consistently deny the possibility of miracles.

All that a wise man therefore has to do, is to guard against imposture and enthusiasm (whereof the history of mankind, it is true, supplies us with innumerable instances) but not to reject the truth of God, for the folly or the knavery of men.

It is strange to observe, to what lengths of incredulity these gentlemen will proceed, to set aside all history and all facts, that have the least tendency to prove that God hath given a religion to mankind. But the truth is, facts of this kind must needs be frightful, staggering things,



things, and as terrible as an apparition, to the man that would have the pleasure of making a religion for himself. They disturb him so, that he can neither philosophize nor live with as much freedom as he would.

Could his Lordship have discredited the miracles of the Old Testament, by shewing them incapable of that historical proof which he demanded (and he took care indeed, to make the conditions of his proof impossible\*) yet he would have done nothing to the purpose, unless he could have discredited those of the New Testament likewise. Because these, considering the connection of the two dispensations, must needs reflect a great credibility on those of the old. And we know that these were done, not in the remote and darker ages of the world, but in open daylight; when the world was at its meridian (if we may so speak) for learning, philosophy, and free enquiry: miracles great, many, carrying the strongest conviction in the manner of their performance; and in their nature miracles of mercy; suited to a dispensation wherein the divine philanthropy so eminently appeared; and peculiarly fitted to establish a character so singular as that of the great messenger of a covenant of peace and reconciliation with mankind, “declared to be the son of God with power, the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him, and the appointed judge of the world”——miracles recorded by eye-witnesses, and the truth of them abundantly confirmed by the very spreading of Christianity under all the difficulties and discouragements that human policy or power could lay in its way; the multitudes of converts that were made to it; and the many lives that were sacrificed for the belief of it in the first century of the gospel; I mean, during the lives of the apostles, and within a few years after.

\* For example, He demands “collateral testimony of those who had no common interest of country, or religion,” &c. to confirm the Scripture account of things: when it is manifest, that there are no other books extant in the universe so old by five hundred years, as the oldest books of Scripture. See his Works, Vol. III. pa. 275. 4to.



For these are the martyrs, or witnesses in the strictest sense, that we may and ought to insist on; witnesses of facts, whereof, in the apostolical age at least, they had the fullest assurance, and the belief whereof they professed and maintained at the expence of their lives. And I could wish this noble argument in proof of our religion were duly weighed. For I think we may collect from the Heathen writers as well as Christian, that the martyrs for Christianity under Nero, for instance, and Trajan, (to go no farther) one of the worst, and one of the best of the Roman emperors (but good or bad, reasons of state prevailed with them more than all the sentiments of humanity) were vastly numerous.

To which if we add the purity and excellency of the religion itself, which these miraculous powers, and this miraculous patience were intended to establish; a blessing so seasonable, so much wanted, so fitted to set a new face upon the world, and to restore the human race to a just sense of their original dignity, which will ever be the best and surest motive to engage them to cultivate every virtue: — Here is enough (one would think) to extort the assent of every sensible and sober man.

The goodness of the design, indeed, is very frankly acknowledged by Lord B. himself. “Had men kept closely (says he) to what the Saviour taught, supposing Christianity to have been purely an human invention, it had been the most amiable and the most useful invention that was ever imposed on mankind for their good.”\* And so elsewhere, when he was in a good mood, he could say — “In all cases the Gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity †.”

And yet all this goodness could not exempt it from the weak efforts of this noble writer to undermine its authority: as if he was resolved to receive it upon no other terms, or in no other light, than as a mere human

\* Works, Vol. IV. 4to. pa. 394.  
pa. 187.

† Works, Vol. V.

invention; and then indeed it might be managed just as the philosopher, or the politician pleased.

But how unhappily are his arguments upon this head conducted! In Letter V, on the study of history, after a long and vehement complaint of the corruption, misrepresentation, false quotation of history, &c. and saying that, "history alone can furnish the proper proofs that the religion we teach is of God,"\* his Lordship endeavours to fix the charge of a mistake on Abbadie and Bishop Gibson, for saying, that the Gospel of St. Matthew, and so of Mark, is cited by Clement Bishop of Rome, by Barnabas, Ignatius, &c. and calls it an "abuse of history, and quite inexcusable in writers that knew, or should have known, that these fathers made use of other Gospels, wherein such passages might be contained" — And in another place he tells us from Fabricius, that these Gospels were at least forty.

Whatever becomes of the argument against Abbadie and the bishop then (wherein, nevertheless, I apprehend his Lordship was more mistaken than they) here is an argument in favour of Christianity well worthy of our consideration, as it gives the strongest assurance of the notoriety of the facts respecting our Saviour. His miracles were wrought in the most public manner, and had sometimes great numbers of spectators; and by the visible effects which remained of most of them, still greater numbers of competent witnesses: and here we are told that the things relating to him were recorded by at least forty writers. What a cause have these gentlemen undertaken to plead for, which is so easily overturned and buried in the ruins of their own arguments or objections! St. Luke indeed acquaints us at the beginning of his Gospel, that many had undertaken the same subject before him†. Nor does the Evangelist find fault with them: no more shall I. It is not to be wondered at, that things so known, so strange, so interesting, should employ so many pens. And as it appears from this remarkable proem of St. Luke, that these Gospel-writers were very

\* Letters, pa. 142. 8vo.

† See Luke i. 1, 2.



early as well as numerous; so for any thing that appears to the contrary, their accounts might be very exact: although for want of that apostolical authority which was necessary to their being received as sacred and authentic histories, they were suffered of course to perish; or perhaps some of them corrupted to serve the purposes of the busy heads of after times, and so we may have the shattered remains of them in this collection of Fabricius.

Be this how it will, if (as the noble writer observes) "a religion founded on the authority of a divine mission" appeals to facts; \* could there be a stronger proof of the notoriety of those facts that evidenced our Saviour's mission, than that so many writers employed themselves so early in a diligent enquiry after, in collecting and recording them? Nevertheless, to prevent that confusion and distraction which so many writers might occasion, as well as to guard against the forged and spurious productions of after times, it was a great instance of the divine wisdom and goodness, to fix the number of those historians or evangelists, whose writings alone were to be held as sacred and authentic.

For that we may not confound the right and the approved Gospels with the apocryphal and rejected ones, Lord B. produces for us the testimony of Irenæus (the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of the Evangelist St. John, and so but a remove or two from the Apostles themselves) that the four Gospels we make use of were the only ones received and acknowledged by the Christian churches. We should scarce have had this concession from his Lordship, but that it afforded him an opportunity of ridiculing the good old man, for a weak argument he had brought, to shew, that they ought to be four Gospels and no more. Had he produced a stronger argument, and it had not suited his Lordship's taste, he must of course have been ranked amongst the fools or madmen.

But now if history alone must furnish the proper proofs "that our religion is of God," what had his Lordship

\* Lett. on Hist. p. 141, 8vo.



to oppose to these authentic histories of Christ? Could he produce any one book written either by a Jew or Heathen of those early times (and sure there were some of them that could read and write) contradicting these accounts, or denying that the blessed Jesus wrought miracles? No, this was a thing acknowledged, though we may suppose much against their wills, by the earliest adversaries of Christianity in their writings. Struck with the apparent evidence of the fact itself, the philosophers among the Heathens had no other shift to make, but to oppose to the genuine miracles of Christ, the real or pretended tricks of magic, the feats of an Apollonius Tyaneus, or something that might serve to puzzle a cause which they were unwilling to give up. The ways of men are as perverse and unaccountable, as those of God are upright and adorable—It is happy for us that the plain narration given us in the Gospels of our Saviour's miracles and the manner of their performance, is of itself sufficient to obviate all the wild suggestions of these men and their followers. We have there indeed an inimitable picture of the author and finisher of our faith; whose wise discourses, and whose patient sufferings, added to his mighty works, raise in the well disposed mind that is susceptible of religious impressions, the idea of a person inexpressibly great and humble—the divine Word or Wisdom, clothed with humanity—or “made flesh, and tabernacled amongst men” (I must borrow a little of the Hebrew phraseology here) that they might “behold his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” John i. 14.

But perhaps I needed not to have laboured this point so much against the noble writer, whose concessions in one place overthrow his objections in another, and who, when he was in the humour for it, very freely acknowledged the Gospel-miracles. But then it must be confessed, that it was with an unlucky intention of setting the New-Testament against the Old, and confronting the miracles of Moses with those of Christ and his Apostles.

\* See Lord B——'s Works, Vol. V. about pa. 187, Quarto.  
“They

though the different nature and intention of the two dispensations (could his Lordship have had the patience to consider it) might have helped him to reconcile the spirit of the one with the other, without questioning the divine authority of either.

After all it should be remembered, that we have little need of the miracles of Moses, or of the following prophets, to support Christianity. The great proof of our religion from the Old Testament stands in the fulfilling of the prophecies which are there delivered; and to examine these therefore is the first step that should be taken by those who mean to prove or disprove it thence. The history is as the vehicle of the prophecies. And that both were extant long before our Saviour came into the world, is a point so evident, that no adversary of Christianity, that I know of, hath had so little modesty as to question it. Let the prophecies then be examined and compared with the events. As these are many, clear, and full; the prophecies of different persons and of different ages, all uniting in one great, and wise, and gracious scheme of providence, tending to the honour of Almighty God, and the infinite benefit of mankind: if these have been fulfilled in their appointed season, here is as clear a proof as can be well conceived of a divine interposition.

And a divine interposition once proved from the prophecies, will leave no longer any room to doubt of the same interposition in the conduct of that people, who were chosen out to be the keepers of these sacred oracles; and who were therefore to be kept themselves by an extraordinary providence miraculously exerting itself at proper times, to prevent their being swallowed up and lost, and so their religion and their sacred books perishing with them.

“ They healed the lame, they cured the blind, they even-raised the dead to prove their mission——Moses proved his mission by miracles likewise. But the miracles wrought by them in the mild and beneficent spirit of Christianity tended to the good of mankind; whereas the miracles he wrought in the fierce and cruel spirit of Judaism, tended to the destruction of mankind.”

Here



Here then is a way opened for considering the history in its true light. And they who would judge with caution upon any point whatever, make it a rule to themselves to take in the whole circumstance of things\*, and will never content themselves with partial views, especially in matters of so high importance. But to quarrel with the history first; or to consider it without any relation to the prophecies, and the scheme of providence carried on by the Jewish and Christian dispensations, (which is the great error of this noble writer) is a very preposterous method of proceeding, and an easy way for a rash or proud man to entangle himself in the snares of infidelity.

It is a history of miracles (says Ld. B.) and it is this that shocks his delicacy. It is a history of providence (say we) and therefore a miraculous interposition at certain times is what might naturally be expected, and is highly credible.

"If it were not a history of miracles" (says his Lordship) or, in his own phrase, "of incredible anecdotes, it would be a history of nothing."†

If by this be meant, that it would contain nothing that is worth recording, we may reply, that it is a history of revealed religion, its rise and progress through the several ages of the world, till it shone out in the fullness of the Gospel. If this were nothing in Ld. B's account, there may be others who think it a matter of the highest consideration.

Beside fixing the principles and measures of our conduct, this (surely) if any thing, must give a check to the pride and the corrupt passions of mankind, and incline them to think soberly at least, and to give reason, rightly so called, a fair hearing: that so every man

\* Incivile est, ut moment jureconsulti, particulam aliquam legis sumere, non perperam tota lege.

† Letter occasioned by one of Tillotson's sermons.

may



may not take his own uninstruited or perverted reason  
 for rather ever varying humour and imagination, offer-  
 ing it for his only oracle.† and so of course do  
 every man that which is right in his own eyes. If it  
 were a thing to be doubted of, whether man be not a  
 fickle, inconsistent, fluctuating creature, when left to  
 the full scope of his own thoughts and reasonings (sub-  
 ject as he is to strong appetites and passions) even where  
 there are great endowments natural and acquired, I  
 think this noble writer's works might go a good way to  
 convince us. — I doubt to find established or  
 revealed religion then be so useful and desirable  
 — nothing in the respect that I have mentioned, beside  
 others which I have not; this, one would think, should  
 make it reasonable to believe, that God may have given  
 mankind such a religion from the beginning, and  
 so create no prejudice in favour of the Holy Scrip-  
 tures. — O notwithstanding, I find to find that  
 indeed the contrary supposition seems to be attended  
 with this absurdity, that the God of Truth hath made  
 it necessary, that the world should be governed by a lie.  
 If some religion be necessary, and none were ever  
 given by God, it would be left to men themselves to  
 supply by their own inventions that which the divine  
 goodness was wanting to supply them, and their religion  
 could be little else but a variety of falsehood in fiction.  
 Even those gentlemen (some of them at least) con-  
 tend, that Polytheism and Idolatry would in this case  
 be naturally the first religion men would form for them-  
 selves. But if this be so, it is a demonstration, that  
 the first religion was revealed, for we are sure, that it  
 was quite another thing, viz. the worship of the one  
 true God, the creator and governor of all things.  
 How men afterwards fell into Polytheism and Idola-  
 try, is easily accounted for: and being a matter of their

† "Every man's reason is every man's oracle." Letter on re-  
 tirement and study.

# THE PREFACE. LXXXIII.

own free choice, and their own great fault, does not in the least reflect upon the wisdom, justice, or goodness of God: but made way for a brighter display of all these attributes, in the restoration and redemption of mankind. ~~ad non redidit, sed ad gloriam ad os patris in pace~~

So that the Christian scheme is every way consistent, rational, and intelligible. As to others—to say the truth, we scarce know whether they have any scheme at all. The utmost that the most ingenious of them can arrive at, is a degree of scepticism, more or less—a deliberate state of doubt——“an escape” (from the bright sunshine of the Gospel, so offensive to weak eyes) into the calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy.” ~~And almost any will for good, and every man~~

But what a state must this be, where all the calm that is to be had, is owing to darkness or obscurity! A profound sleep then, one would think, should be the wish and choice of these gentlemen. Or if they must needs be employed—why do they not erect some Academy of No Science, where they may debate, with as much calmness and obscurity as they please, these or the like profound and puzzling questions——Whether history be of any credit——Whether learning be of any use——Whether a book or writing may be understood——Whether there be any such thing as truth——Whether there ever was such a person as the Saviour; or whether we have souls to save——Whether that which hath been may be——Whether it be possible that we may live hereafter——Or, whether we can be sure that we live at present.

What a large field is here for our gentlemen of taste and scepticism to expatiate in! and what edifying productions might we not expect to see from time to time, drawn up in the most polite and fashionable phrase, with philosophical disputations, pro and con, and still concluding with the nihil scire——or sometimes, ne id ipsum quidem.



But let us return from these gloomy regions of doubt, of endless wandering, and perplexity; into the upper air of light and truth. What I was about to observe is this—that a revelation once supposed; the very nature of the thing will lead us to expect a mixture of those extraordinary anecdotes which were so offensive to Ld. B. and which he therefore styles incredible. For a history of revealed religion without any miraculous incidents, or an extraordinary interposition of divine providence, would be an incredible thing indeed.

If by “a history of miracles or nothing” the noble writer only meant to point at the frequency of them, as if they had filled up almost every page of the Old Testament; we must take leave to say, that this representation of the thing is very hyperbolic.

The scripture-miracles had their proper seasons; were wrought to plant religion, to preserve, or to reform it; to evince the superiority of the true God over the false ones; or when the affairs of his people were at a crisis, so that they were in great danger, as a nation, of being utterly extirpated, and the very purpose for which they were a chosen people defeated, had not omnipotent wisdom interposed for their preservation.

God could have interposed (you will say, perhaps) without a miracle—He could, no doubt, and doth, and will carry on the great work of his providence by many ways that we are unacquainted with.

But how, after all, if men should be so weak or perverse as to deny that there is any interposal of God's providence in human affairs? Will you leave him no way to convince them? We see how apt men are to doubt or to deny a providence, after all the miraculous proofs that have been given of it: and how would the case stand, do we think, if no one instance of that kind could be produced?

A proof of fact that God governs the world, is precisely what men seem to want, and what the scripture-

ture-history supplies us with. And if prophecies, and miracles, and a scheme of providence, to which they are subservient, apparently wise and good, carried on from the beginning of the world, and reaching even to the end of it, be not such a proof, it is scarce possible to conceive what other proof men can demand, or could be given them.

Here then is that true light wherein the scripture-miracles are to be regarded by us; and which must for ever distinguish them from mimicry and imposture, and all the little arts and tricks of men. The great and wise design of God carried on by the Jewish and Christian dispensations, gives a strong proof or credibility to the miracles (for miracles, or no miracles, are alike easy to omnipotence). And again, both these are supported by the prophecies still extant in the Old Testament, given out at sundry times and in divers manners, for centuries of years before the birth of Christ; and apparently fulfilled by him at his coming; as may be seen from the Gospels, and other books of the New Testament.

Thus is it that these two volumes lend a mutual support to each other, and meeting like an arch, remain, and will remain, firm and immovable (notwithstanding the wild torrents of infidelity that may sometimes threaten them) as long as there shall be virtue enough left in the Christian world to incline men to study them, and learning to enable them to interpret and defend them.

If I have exceeded either in the length or warmth of this apology for the sacred writings; the importance of the subject must be pleaded by me in excuse for it. For if there be a question of the nearest concern to us, both with respect to our temporal and eternal interests, it is certainly this before us.

Unhappily as the Christian world stands divided, it is a pleasure to reflect, that Protestants (in general, as I apprehend) profess to take the Holy Scriptures for the only



# LXXXVI.      The P R E F A C E.

only rule of their faith. The superiority which they must ever give them over those of the Romish persuasion, is real, solid and inestimable. It is well known, that Popery, in its corrupt part, is merely a political device, irreconcilable with scripture, so that they are under a necessity either of declining its authority, or of claiming to themselves an authority of interpreting it, or of substituting the decrees of popes and councils in the room of it, which are therefore, in reality, their rule. And this makes a reformation of Popery impossible, without a renunciation of the principles of Popery.

They who receive the Holy Scriptures for their rule, have on the other hand this great advantage; that whatever errors may have crept into particular churches, here is a fixed standard whereby to rectify them, without departing from their avowed principle. The authority of God alone is here submitted to implicitly. Truth, learning, an ingenuous liberty, a virtue fixed on its right basis, and a piety sincere; an union of charity (at least) so strongly recommended in these sacred pages; as well as a fair prospect of uniting more and more even in sentiment or opinion, will ever be on this side of the question. An ignorant superstition, a forced dissimulation of sentiments; a refined but irreligious policy; fraud, violence, cruelty, and slavery, seem naturally to range themselves on the other.

The happiness of society, of individuals, of this world and the next, is opened to us, and far ever flowing from the inexhaustible fountain of divine wisdom, through the channel of this sacred book. The streams are mine (says a particular, universal, mistaken, infallible church) and you shall have none of them without my licence. They are dangerous and unwholesome, if taken simply as they flow from their spring-head in Paradise. I must medicate them for you, and then you may sip a little. If the potion should look foul, you may shut your eyes: or if it seem bitter, it is but to renounce your taste.

I must not proceed in this way, in an affair so serious.

But if this be the real state of the case: we may naturally hope, that this great division, which has now subsisted for two hundred years or more, may lessen by degrees, and end at last (through the divine blessing) to the advantage of the Protestant cause, if we still adhere to the great Protestant principles, which must ever be esteemed a fundamental. If we study and reverence this sacred book, which we profess to take for our rule; and if we make it our rule indeed, by conforming to its dictates, and so honour that God who gave it us.—For those that honour him he will honour.

It is the policy of the Romanists to represent this book as obscure. Let us endeavour to clear it for them. Their commentators often tell us, that we must interpret the Holy Scriptures according to the analogy of faith—meaning that faith, no doubt, which is contained in their creed or catechisms; in which sense the rule is evidently false, as well as highly derogatory to the honour of Almighty God. Take it indeed in any other sense than this, that one part of the Scripture is to be interpreted by another according to the best understanding that we have; and this principle seems to be dangerous and ensnaring. They often amuse us with encomiums on that union and concord which must arise from an implicit acquiescence in their infallibility. But such an union by mere force—such a *union with so much obscurity*—is fit only for those who have brought themselves to doubt of every thing: for such as these may profess any thing, or nothing.

I am far from thinking, however, that these gentlemen are fond of coming under such a yoke, or that they have the least intencion to drive others into it. But they would do well to consider, what may be the natural consequence of endeavouring to take off the minds of men from a due reverence for that sacred book, which is our chief bulwark both against Popery and profligacy, and leaving them in



an unsettled state. When the mind is thus disengaged, and brought into suspense, paulo momento huc illuc impetitur, says a very sensible observer of mankind — the least weight of interest or policy will turn the scale in favour of any profession of religion, where there is no real religion to obstruct it. And this probably may best account for the so much talked of growth of Popery amongst us, which can scarce be owing to any rational conviction.

And yet it is surprising to observe with what art these great masters of a worldly policy have been able to blend their own cause with that of Christianity and the Holy Scriptures, so as thereby to impose even upon men of sense. The authority of these books, (says the noble writer I have often mentioned, and who, one would think, should have known better) "is maintained in some countries by inquisitors and hangmen." As if maintaining image-worship, prayers to saints, transubstantiation and implicit faith, the pope's supremacy, and such other things as these books know nothing of or condemn, were maintaining the authority of these books.

Under this delusion, it is no wonder if his lordship picked up his objections to the Holy Scriptures from some of the worst of the Romish writers; though the very best of them, for an obvious reason, learned and useful as they are upon other subjects, are not always to be trusted upon this.

Under this delusion, it is not strange to find his Lordship asserting, that "Christianity hath been in decay ever since the resurrection of letters." † though it be well known that the resurrection of letters was soon followed with a reformation of corrupted and abused Christianity, by bringing it back to the standard of the Holy Scriptures.

Christianity then, which rose with the resurrection of letters, and was happily reformed upon its proper basis, can

\* Ld. Bs. Works, quarto, Vol. 3. about p. 271.

† Letter on Hist. p. 149, 2d. Edit. octavo,

never be said to have lost any thing by it: (though it is to be hoped Popery has, and ever will) and if it be true, that it is at present in decay, we must look out for some other cause of it than either a resurrection or a cultivation of learning: unless its adversaries can persuade the world that they have all the learning on their side: which they will never be able to do, by their present conduct at least, and that avowed contempt of literature which is grown so fashionable amongst them. But what need of hard study and taking pains, when a sprightly wit can see through every thing with a glance of his eye?

If these gentlemen will not be angry, we might borrow a well known observation of Ld. Verulam, and accommodate it here; and this perhaps will account in part for this extraordinary phenomenon. *Verum est tamen (says that sagacious author) parum philosophia naturalis homines inclinare in atheismum, at altiore scientiam eos ad religionem circumagere*\*. It may be true, that a little learning will incline men to infidelity; but then a full measure of it, probably, would wheel them back again, and make them Christians.

I cannot forbear saying, that it was not an abundance of learning, whatever it was, that made Ld. B. no better Christian, or that gave him such an unreasonable disgust of the Holy Scriptures. If any, nevertheless, be in danger of being misled by the authority of this admired writer, and the opinion they may have entertained of his judgment or capacity: we can only oppose authority to authority. And as I have said somewhat of the Bayle and Lockes at the conclusion of the Book, so here at the conclusion of this Preface I shall take leave to instance in another excellent person, whom I believe Ld. B. and his admirers will allow to have been his equal in all respects (others may think greatly his superior) for he was a wise statesman, an able and impartial historian, and had no



doubtedly as much knowledge and good sense as *Ld. Balin-*  
*brooke*, without affecting to philosophize in a way so strange  
 and singular; I mean the celebrated *Thuanus*, or *Mar-*  
*de Thou*.—One who, though he was bred up, and lived  
 and died in the communion of the church of Rome, which  
 is not apt to give a favourable bent that way, yet, “hav-  
 ing truth” (as an eloquent preacher <sup>said of him</sup>) “more  
 goodness than the principles of that religion do either  
 inspire men to, or allow of,” was such a lover and ad-  
 mirer of the Holy Scriptures, that he turned the book of  
*Job*, the *Ecclesiastes*, *Jeremiah's Lamentations*, and se-  
 veral of the Minor Prophets, into Latin verse.

As these poems are expressly mentioned in his life, I  
 cannot but think it a great omission in the London edition  
 of *Thuanus's* history, that they were not inserted amongst  
 the other pieces in the seventh or last volume. And the  
 bookseller's reason for not doing it appears very unsatis-  
 factory, unless he had then some intention (as probably he  
 had) to publish this great man's poems separately in a  
 differ volume. These translations, however, would have  
 taken up but little room, and might have been thought by  
 some a great ornament to the work. For *Thuanus* had a  
 very easy, and a very masterly way of versifying †.

\* See Archbishop Tillotson's remarkable fifth of November  
 sermon, preached A. D. 1678, Vol. I. Fol. p. 208.

† *Pineda*, who has a commentary upon the little book of *Ec-*  
*clesiastes* of above a thousand pages in folio, besides a *Solomon pra-*  
*eface*, as he calls it, or a sort of general preface to his commentary  
 on the books of Solomon, containing near eight hundred pages  
 more; (I take notice of this the rather, to justify what I have said  
 of the voluminousness of the Jesuit commentators) has inserted a  
 good part of *Thuanus's* translation of *Ecclesiastes* into his com-  
 mentary, as well as that of *Ar. Montanus*, and some others. It  
 is pleasant to observe the difference betwixt the genteel and easy  
 manner of *Thuanus*, and the scholar-like, exact, but rougher and  
 obscurer poetry of *Montanus*. But what I meant to observe, is,  
 that this learned Jesuit, to give him his due, hath left us the fol-  
 lowing very just character of this poetical performance of *Thua-*  
*nus*.—*Jacobi Augusti Thuani heroica metaphrasis, dulcis, ar-*  
*guta*

I have only this to add, that although I could have strengthened many passages in the book by increasing the notes, I have purposely avoided it for two reasons: because of the interruption which a frequent turning to the margin, for a note, is apt to give to the attention of the reader; but chiefly, because those who bought up the first impression having paid a full price for it, I was unwilling to lessen the value of their purchase by such new additions to this second. If there be any thing in this long preface which they may think worthy their perusal, I have ordered it to be printed in quarto, the same number as the quarto edition, and for their use only.

*guta, leniter flectit, et ad gravia plena; meditata sed sententiosa, ita quicquid sententiarum habet ex annotationibus Bibliorum Stephani seu Vatabli deprompt.*

The word *meditata* puts me in mind of what is said in Thuanus's life, that the translation of the book of Job cost him a labour of two years: so that this, I conclude, must have been a well-studied, and well finished work.

*Totum biennium in eum incubuit—de Vita sua, p. 71.*  
taken up but little room, and might have been thought by some a great ornament to the work. For Thuanus had a very easy, and a very masterly way of writing.

See Archbishop Tillotson's remarkable fifth of November sermon, preached A. D. 1678, Vol. I. Fol. p. 208.  
+ Pineda, who has a commentary upon the little book of Ecclesiastes of above a thousand pages in folio, besides a Solomon's view, as he calls it, or a sort of general preface to his commentary on the books of Solomon, containing near eight hundred pages more; (I take notice of this the rather, to justify what I have said of the voluminousness of the Jewish commentators) has inserted a good part of Thuanus's translation of Ecclesiastes into his commentary, as well as that of Ar. Montanus, and some others. It is pleasant to observe the difference between the gentle and easy manner of Thuanus, and the scholar-like, exact, but rougher and obscurer poetry of Montanus. But what I meant to observe, is that this learned Jewish, to give him his due, hath left us the following very just character of this poetical performance of Thuanus:—*Jacobi Augusti Thuanus heretica metaphysica, quibus ar-*



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**XX.**



A  
Critical Dissertation  
ON THE  
BOOK of *JOB*.

PART I. SECT. I.

HE Author of *The Divine Legislation of Moses* demonstrated from the *Omission of the Doctrine of a Future State of Reward and Punishment in the Jewish Dispensation*, having in the course of his reasoning asserted, and endeavoured to prove, that "as Moses taught not the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, so neither had the ancient Jews any knowledge of it\*;" he was under a necessity of examining those texts of the Old Testament where this doctrine is supposed to be delivered.

\* D. L. V. 2. Book 5. Sect. 5. See the Contents.



AND because the book of Job stood in his way, and especially that well-known text, chap. xix. *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, &c. which, if meant of a future state, as the words are generally understood, and the book so old as is commonly believed, must overturn his argument at once: he therefore sets himself to prove, that the book itself is no older than the time of Ezra, whom he conjectures to be the writer of it; and that the words of Job in this passage are to be interpreted of his hopes of a temporal deliverance only.

As these are two distinct points, the consideration of them will make two distinct parts of this dissertation.

To make good his former point, the learned writer proposes to enquire,

1. WHAT kind of composition the book of Job really is.

2. IN what age it was written.

3. WHO was the author.

THE resolution which he gives to these enquiries, is briefly this—That the book of Job is a poem of the dramatic kind, written by Ezra some time between the return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, and their thorough settlement in their own country\*; and fitted to the circumstances of those times, by his making it “allegorical as well as dramatic: That is, representing the real persons of that age under the persons of the drama.”†

THAT Job, for example, in this poem, is designed to personate the Jewish people: his three friends, the three great enemies of the Jews, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, who, upon their return from the captivity, vexed and obstructed them in rebuilding their city and temple: that Job’s wife was intended by the poet to represent the idolatrous wives which many of the Jews had taken to them contrary to the law, and for which they are reproved by Nehemiah, and obliged to come into a reformation.

\* D. L. V. 2. p. 503.

† Ibid. p. 506.

THESE and some other resemblances the author finds betwixt the story of Job and the state of the Jews, of those times wherein he supposes the book to have been written; and upon this and other considerations builds his notion of its being an allegorical composition. We shall see more of it when we come to the particulars.

THE singularity of this notion is, (I think) a just objection to it; at least so far as to require that the proofs to be produced should be clear and strong, in proportion to the strangeness of the thing. Let us see whether they are so, or not.

To prove it a dramatic work, the learned writer argues from the style, the sentiments, and the whole form of the composition.

“As to the style\* (says he) it has been observed by the critics, even from the time of St. Jerom, that all but the introduction and conclusion is in measure.”

BUT then he adds immediately, “As it was the custom of antiquity to compose their gravest writings of religion, laws, and history in verse, this circumstance alone should, I think, have little share in determining the nature of the composition.”

So that still it may be a true history, in opposition to a feigned or dramatic work, though written for the most part in measure. Nay, this very circumstance greatly favours the antiquity of the book, since the learned generally agree, that the oldest compositions were in verse or measure.

He proceeds,

“2. But when we take the sentiments along, and find throughout not only verse but poetry, a poetry animated by all the sublimity of figures and floridness of description; and on the coolest and most abstract subject; we cannot chuse but conclude the whole to be a work of imagination.”†

Now here again, this sublimity of sentiments and figures might be urged as a good presumption of the antiquity of the book. The very conversation-lan-

\* V. 2. p. 484.

† Ibid.



guage of those ancient times (if we may believe a writer of no inconsiderable authority with this gentleman,\*) was full of metaphors and figures of the boldest sort. And indeed it was natural for those who were possessed of a language probably at this time not very copious, when in the heat of a debate, and labouring for words to express themselves by, to run-out into this sort of style.

MOREOVER the subject of their debate, which the author calls the coolest and most abstract, was, according to his own account, a question of religion, and that of some importance. And how was it possible for men like these, plain and simple, and at the same time zealously religious, to argue coolly upon such a subject? Beside that, the more abstract the subject, the more would they want proper words, the more would they abound in metaphors and figures. And further, as the chief point controverted was, in reality, Whether Job were innocent or guilty of those latent sins of which they had suspected him, (for it was this that led them into all that labyrinth of dispute about the ways of providence;) both the accusers and the accused were too much interested in the affair, to argue coolly and dispassionately.

So that, in every view, the style and sentiments are natural, suited to the subject and the speakers. And therefore, no argument can be drawn from hence, to prove it a dramatic poem rather than historical.

BUT, supposing the work to be dramatical, how does it follow from hence that it must be of a lower date than is generally supposed, viz. the time when Job lived, or perhaps a generation or two after? And yet this is a point the author takes for granted, that the "shewing it to be such a kind of work must of consequence bring it down to an age remote from that of the subject.†" As if Shakespear's *Henry the Eighth*, or Dryden's *Aurengzeb*, because they are writings of the dramatic kind, might be drawn into an ar-

\* The author of the enquiry into Homer's life, &c.

† V. 2. p. 484.

gument that those princes must have lived a thousand years before the poets. Is there a necessity that the drama and its subject should be thus separated by an interval of ages? Or had the learned writer any other reason in his thoughts, which his readers are left to guess at?

He himself allows the reality of Job's person, and that he lived about the time supposed, *viz.* a generation or two before Moses: at least he objects nothing to the common opinion in this matter. "The eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in afflictions, and his preceding and subsequent felicity;" these likewise are allowed to be "realities so unquestionable, that a man must set aside sacred antiquity, before he can admit a doubt concerning them.\*"

PERHAPS too he will not differ with us about that other circumstance of the three friends coming to mourn with and to comfort him, and entering into a long debate with him about the nature of afflictions. This particular, at least, is very natural, and bids fair for true history.

Now supposing some one well acquainted with this famous story, should, in the same or the next generation, give it a poetical turn; and, instead of saying that the providence of God overwhelmed this good man with the most deplorable calamities, should introduce Satan as the agent by divine permission, according to that very ancient notion of angels good and bad the ministers of providence—should he lengthen out the dispute that was held betwixt this unhappy man and his mistaken friends, and be beholden to his own genius and invention for the filling-up the dialogue—should he close it, in the same poetical way, with a description of the Deity's interposing to put an end to the debate; to shew to both sides wherein they were wrong, and where such controversies always ought to rest, *viz.* in the divine omnipotence on the one hand, and the duty of resignation on the other; and then by

\* V. 2. p. 483.



an act of that omnipotence, designed (as it were) on purpose to convince them, restoring this good man to a more prosperous state than ever—I say, should we suppose a person, in the same or the next generation after Job, to record his famous story with all these poetical liberties, such as a modern author might be apt to take, (I do not say that this is the truth of the case; for I propose to give another view of the poem in a following section—but suppose it such a work of imagination as I have here described) the learned writer may call it a dramatic composition if he please; but the thing will be the same, as to the point in question, as if it had been an exact historical narration. I mean, the doctrines to be found in it will be the doctrines of those ancient times: and if a resurrection or a future state be one of them, it is plain this doctrine must have been known at that time, and known by the Israelites, if the book was admitted into the canon of their scriptures. So that the poeticalness and dramaticalness of the work seem to be quite beside the question.

BUT let us go on with his arguments however.

To prove it a work of the dramatic kind, after taking notice of the style and sentiments, as above—

“The last and most convincing circumstances (says he) is the whole form of the composition.”

AND here, his first exception to the historical truth of the relation is drawn from this particular, “That three cordial friends should make a solemn appointment to go mourn with Job and to comfort him—and yet to be no sooner set in, than intirely to forget their errand; and, miserable comforters as they were, instead of mourning with him—to wrangle with and contradict him in every word he spoke—They would needs have it, against all Job’s protestations to the contrary, that his misfortunes came upon him in punishment for his crimes.” †

Now in this it is plain that Job’s friends were in the wrong; and I apprehend that they are so pronoun-

\* V. 2. p. 485.

† V. 2. p. 486.

ced by God himself. But look at the poem in the allegorical view, wherein Job personates the Jewish nation; and could it be wrong to charge them with their sins as the cause of their sufferings?

YES, (says the learned writer) for "the Jews came from the captivity with hearts full of zeal for the law, and abhorrence of all their former idolatries."\* And this is the precise time which he fixes for the date of the poem, viz. the time betwixt "their return and thorough settlement in their own country."†

BUT were they at this time then perfectly free from all such crimes as might call for punishment? NO. He himself tells us but two or three pages after, that "several disorders contrary to the law had crept in amongst them; as the marrying strange wives, and exercising usury."‡ And indeed we find Nehemiah reproving them with great zeal for these and some other evil practices. (Nehem. xiii. 15.—)

So that in this very precise time, which the author has pitched upon as standing clear, he thinks, of all objections, the Jews could be but ill represented by so holy a man as Job. Nor did it require false friends (as he supposes) to charge them with crimes; since even their best friend, Nehemiah himself, was very severe upon them in his charges of that sort.

BUT "Hence (says he) it appears that these friends were of a singular complexion, and deservedly gave occasion to a proverb that sets them in no very honourable and advantageous light."|| Meaning that their conduct was unnatural, and therefore could not be agreeable to the truth of history. True friends, he supposes, would never behave in such a manner, as to pretend to come to mourn with and to comfort their friend, and then presently forget their errand, and fall to wrangling with and contradicting him,\* &c. Whence he infers, that they were designed to represent three false friends, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.

BUT all this proceeds upon a wide mistake. For there is nothing in the conduct of Job's friends that

\* V. 2. p. 502. † Ibid. p. 503. ‡ Ibid. p. 505. || Ibid. p. 487.



shews them to be false or hypocritical in their friendship, but only erroneous in their judgment.

THEY came with a sincere design to mourn with and to comfort him. But as they came with a false persuasion too, that great sufferings were a shrewd token of great sins, and upon this persuasion were too hasty to condemn their friend when they saw the miserable plight that he was in : their hope was, first to bring him to confession, and then to administer the proper arguments of consolation. And though there was something rash, or ill-natured (if you please) in all this, yet there was nothing unnatural in it.

BUT we shall see how the learned writer solves the difficulty.

“ BUT suppose now (says he) the work to be dramatical, and we immediately see the reason of their behaviour. For had they not been indulged in their strange captious humour, the author could never have produced a piece of that integrity of action, which a scenic representation demanded; and they they might as well have held their tongues seven days longer, as not contradict when they did begin to speak. This as to what the drama in general required.”\*

THIS is a pleasant reason indeed. These friends must do what he supposes to be strange and unnatural, purely to help out the drama. Now I thought that in a dramatic piece every thing was to be represented in a natural way. For whatever is shocking and unnatural, is (to be sure) so far improbable, and therefore contrary to a well-known rule in this case.

BUT then he has a salvo presently. For he allows that this would be “ transgressing nature for the sake of the plot. But we shall shew (says he) when we come to examine the moral of the poem, that nature is exactly followed; for that under these three miserable comforters, how true friends soever in the fable, certain false friends were intended to be shadowed out in the moral.”†

\* V. 2. p. 487.

† Ibid. p. 487, 488.

AND yet these false friends are described as having so much fellow-feeling of Job's sufferings, that they sit with him seven days and nights upon the ground, without being able to speak to him. If this be the dramatic way of representing false friends, how shall we know the false from the true?

"UNDER these three miserable comforters (says he) how true friends soever in the fable, certain false friends were intended to be shadowed out in the moral; and so nature is exactly followed." What a happy way is here of reconciling contradictions! It seems, truth may become falsehood, if it be necessary to support the allegory: the moral and the fable may disagree as widely as you please; and the conclusion, by a new sort of logic, have something in it very different from the premises.

BUT to go on with his proofs that the book of Job is dramatical.

AFTER Job and his friends "had exhausted their whole stock of arguments, and made the matter more doubtful than they found it——in this embarrass (says he) the author has recourse to the common expedient of dramatic writers, *Θεὸς ἀπομυχανῶς*, to draw him from his straits. And if ever that precept of the masters of composition,

"*Nec Deus interfit nisi dignus vindice nodus*," was well followed, it was here. For what can we conceive more worthy of the presence of a God, than to unfold the mysterious ways of providence?"\*

And yet he says just after,  
"BUT to the surprise of all who consider this attentively, and consider it as the strict relation of a fact, they find God introduced to do this in a speech which clears up no difficulties, but makes all hopes of deciding the question desperate, by an appeal to his almighty power."\*

So then——this seems to fall as hard upon the dramatic writer as historian: for of what use is the *Θεὸς ἀπομυχανῶς*, if no difficulties be cleared up by it?

\* V. 2. p. 488. † Ibid.



BUT he adds——“ A plain proof that the interposition was only a piece of poetical machinery. And in that case we see the reason why the knot remains untied : for the sacred writer was no wiser when he spoke poetically in the person of God, than when in that of Job or his friends.”\*

THIS is acutely said ; but how advantageously to the character of an inspired writer, and “ one of the most eminent of God’s prophets,”† as he styles Ezra the supposed author of the book, is another question. To me it seems to represent him as doing a very weak thing; viz. raising a difficulty which he could not clear; nay, introducing the Deity to this insignificant purpose.

BUT perhaps we shall find, upon considering the poem in its true light, that this interposition of the Deity gave a full solution to all difficulties.

AND thus much for his attempt to prove the book of Job to be dramatical. Which nevertheless if we should allow him, would (as I observed) be nothing to his purpose; since the work might still be of the same antiquity that we suppose it, and consequently the doctrines contained in it would be the doctrines of those ancient times. Nay more, it may contain a true history, though handled in a poetical manner; which is the opinion of the learned Grotius, and followed by many other writers upon the subject. Though perhaps they who agree in this general notion, may differ widely in particulars, if they were called upon to explain themselves, and to fix the bounds betwixt the poet and historian. It is difficult to say how far the embellishments of poetry might reach in those ancient times; probably far short of what they did in after-ages, when the thing was more and more improved into an art.

BUT as the learned writer, under this head of his enquiry, has an animadversion upon Grotius, and another upon the author of *Archæologia Philof.* (Dr. Bur-

\* V. 2. p. 489. † Ibid. p. 542.

net) I shall briefly consider what he objects to each, and so conclude this section.

HE takes notice of it as an error in Grotius, that he will not allow the book of Job to be "later than Ezekiel, because that prophet mentions Job. \* Which, to make a good argument (says he) must suppose Job was unknown until this book was written: consequently that his person was fictitious; contrary to his own supposition, that there was a real Job living in the time of Moses."

BUT perhaps Grotius did not build his notion upon Ezekiel's bare mention of Job, but his mentioning him as a person famous and in high esteem, as Noah and Daniel, with whom he is ranked.

NOW the question is, how Job should be so famous in Ezekiel's time. To suppose an oral tradition of him preserved for so many ages, without any written history to ascertain it, is to suppose a thing incredible. If it were a written record of him that made him so well known; Why not this very book of Job we are contending about, which has all the marks of the greatest antiquity?

WHAT therefore is most to be wondered at in Grotius, is not, that he believed the book of Job to be older than Ezekiel; but that he stopped short here, and would not allow it a much higher date.

As for the author of *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ*, like many other ingenious men, too fond (perhaps) of thinking out of the common track, he was thereby led into some errors. Nevertheless his reasoning upon this subject is not much amiss. He reckons it an "unlikely thing, that the Jews, after they were formed into a republic, and separated from all other nations by the sanctity of their laws, should propose to themselves a gentile and an alien of the same time and age, (*ejusdem temporis et sæculi alienigenam*) as an example of piety, or admit his history into their canon of Scripture."

\* Ezek. xiv. 14, 15.

To



To which Mr. W—— replies, that “if Job was of the patriarchal times, he was a fit example of piety, let his history be wrote when it would.” †

BUT this is the very thing Dr. Burnet was contending for, *viz.* that Job must have been of the patriarchal times, or the Jews would never have taken his history in their canon, or proposed him as an example of piety.

HERE then the question recurs—— How should Job or his story be known from the patriarchal times downward, had there not been some written record of him? And why not this as likely as any other? There is no other ancient history of him extant—— There never was any other, that we know of—— And therefore this has the right of possession, and we ought to regard it as the true history, unless some clear and evident reasons to the contrary be produced; which, I think, has not yet been done.

† See the *Div. Leg.* V. 2. p. 490. Note *m.* And the *Arch. Phil.* in the place there cited.

## S E C T. II.

WE have seen the force of the learned writer's arguments to prove the book of Job to be dramatical; as also the little use that could be made of it, if it were proved.

HE next proceeds to fix the time when it was written. And first asserts in general, that “it was written some time under the Mosaic dispensation.” \*

BUT as to this “it is objected, that, if written in those times, it is very strange that not a single word of the Mosaic law, nor any distant allusion to the rites or ceremonies of it, nor any historical circumstance under it, nor any species of idolatry in use during its period, should be found in it.—†” He replies by saying, “that he who takes a real personage for the subject of his poem, will be obliged to shew him in the customs and sentiments of his proper age and country.” And therefore the rule of

\* *D. L. V. 2. p. 491.*

† *Ibid.*

deco-

decorum would not suffer the author, whoever he was, to give any other than distant and obscure allusions to the Jewish law or history. But that such allusions are to be found in this book; some that fell from the author unawares, and some with design.

As the question before us is of some importance, I shall consider the instances produced under each of these heads.

“SOME slight indecorums\* (says he) we may reasonably expect to find, if the author was indeed a Jew: and such, if I am not much mistaken, we do find. Job, speaking of the wicked man, says, *He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.* † — *God layeth up iniquity for his children.* ‡ — Again he says, *That idolatry was an iniquity to be punished by the judge.* || Now both these species of punishment were, as we have shewn, peculiar to the Mosaic dispensation.”

LET us begin with the last text — *An iniquity to be punished by the judge.* So it is expressed in our translation. But the Hebrew is only two words, viz. *עון פלילי*, *yavon pelili*, which a learned commentator ¶ renders *iniquitas arbitratoria*; meaning, as he explains it, (for it requires a little explanation) “such an iniquity as any one must judge to be so.” And he confirms his interpretation by the use of the word *pelilim*, (Deut. xxxii. 31.) *Their rock is not as our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges*; that is, in the judgment or opinion of our very enemies. So that here is nothing intimated of a judicial trial or punishment, but only the notoriety of the sin observed. And thus it is that the Chaldee paraphrase, as well as the Greek and Latin versions, interpret it, of a great or heinous iniquity.

BUT supposing it were rightly rendered *an iniquity to be punished by the judge*: as this may well be understood of the supreme judge of all; who shall say, that it does not belong to him, as the Lord and Sovereign of

\* V. 2. p. 492, 493. † Chap. xvii. 5. ‡ Chap. xxi. 19.

|| Ch. xxxi. 28. ¶ Alb. Schultens in loc.



the World, to punish those who, in effect, deny him to be such, and transfer his honour to another?

THE whole of the objection then, we see, lies in viewing things in that peculiar light wherein the learned writer places them, which is not always the clearest or the best. And the same may be said with regard to that other objection mentioned by him, of children suffering for their parents sins. The notion itself was common enough among the heathens, as may be seen from that verse of Theocritus, delivered as a sort of Oracle from Jupiter. *Idyll. 26.*

Ευσεβέων παῖδεςσι τὰ λώια, δυσσεβέων δ' οὐ.

That "good things happen to children of religious persons, not so to those of the irreligious." This, it seems, was a standing observation with them; and they left it to the deity himself to judge of the equity of his own proceedings.

THERE is a remarkable passage in Isaiah, (ch. xiv. 20.—) where the prophet first lays it down as a general truth, a sort of moral or proverbial saying, *The seed of evil doers shall not be renowned.* And then applies it to the king of Babylon in particular, foretelling expressly, that his children should be extirpated for the iniquity of their fathers. (Is. xiv. 21.) *Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.* (Ver. 22.) *For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord.*

WHICH shews plainly, that inflictions of this kind were not so peculiar to the Jewish polity or theocracy, but that the same method of providence was observed, in some degree at least, with respect to all mankind.

It may not be amiss to observe, however, that the first text cited by the author, viz. *He that speaketh flattery to his friends, the eyes of his children shall fail,* is a wrong translation. The Hebrew carries a very different sense, which is literally thus—*He shall reckon friends for a portion, (or inheritance) and the eyes of his children shall*

*shall fail*— that is, with expectation. They may look their eyes out, before they receive any benefit or assistance from these friends. The expression is proverbial, intimating how liable men are to be disappointed, who depend upon the constancy of human friendships. And nothing could be more apposite to Job's purpose.

I BORROW this interpretation, which I think a very happy one, from the learned Alb. Schultens; and I am glad to do him this justice here, because I shall be obliged to take notice of some mistakes of his elsewhere.\*

"BUT a Jew (as Mr. W—— goes on) might naturally not reflect "that these species of punishment "could not be part of the general law of God and nature. And so, while he was really describing the "oeconomy under which he lived, suppose himself to "be representing the customs and notions of more ancient times: which that it was his design to do, in "the last instance at least, appears from his mentioning only the most early species of idolatry, the worship of the sun and moon. Job xxxi. 26."

THIS indeed is a remarkable text, that has been often urged by learned men as an argument of the antiquity of the book of Job; and which the author therefore, by what is here suggested, endeavours to evade the force of. But, had Ezra been the writer of this book, it is strange he should not mention other species of idolatry as well as this: for though this was the most early sort, yet they were all of such antiquity, that few of his readers would think he had transgressed chronology by the mention of them.

BUT what is still more strange, had this been such an allegorical poem as Mr. W—— supposes, is, that

\* To justify the translation, I might observe, that *חֶלֶק*, *chelek*, properly signifies a portion or possession; and is never used for flattery, except once, and then with another word joined to it, to ascertain its sense, Prov. vii. 21. *Be-chelek sepaat-ha—* with the flattery (the smoothness) of her lips she forced him.

As for the other phrase, *the failing of the eyes*, it is used in the sense of a deferred or disappointed hope (I think) wherever it occurs, as Job xi. 10. Ps. lxix. 4. Jer. xiv. 6. and elsewhere—



the author of it should put into the mouth of Job so impudent a falsehood, taking him for a representative of the Jewish people, as that he was never guilty of idolatry. For Job allows, that had he ever worshipped the sun or moon, though but secretly enticed thereto, his punishment had been just. Whereas, with respect to the Jewish people, their own prophets express, that it was for the punishment of their idolatries, chiefly, that all their calamities befel them.

WE are next referred to some phrases of a late original (as the learned writer supposes them) for the late date of this book.\* Thus Zophar, speaking of the wicked man, says, *He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter* (Chap. xx. 17.) This he would have to be “a proverbial speech, taken from “the descriptions of the Holy land,” as *a land flowing with milk and honey*, Exod. iii. 8.—xiii. 5, &c.

BUT I think, proverbial speeches are usually conveyed in the same form of words; and here is a great variation in the expression. For there is but one word the same, viz. *debasb*, honey. Moreover supposing *to flow with milk and honey*, or *rivers of honey and butter*, were a proverbial expression to denote a fertile land; yet it might be used, for any thing that appears to the contrary, in Job's time and country, and before ever Moses wrote.

MILK and honey were indeed such delicacies with the ancients, that Pindar, who had none of the lowest opinion of his own performances, compares his song to them for its sweetness. Χαῖρε φίλος, ἐγὼ τόδε τοι πέμπω μεμιγμένον μέλι λευκὸν σὺν γάλακτι.—&c. Nem. i. d. γ.

THE words of Eliphaz (Chap. xxii. 22.) are produced as another proof of the same kind; *Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth*, &c. “The phrase, (says Mr. W——) was taken from the verbal “delivery of “the Jewish law from mount Sinai.” He adds, “the “Rabbins were so sensible of the expressive peculiarity of this phrase, that they say the law of Moses is “here spoken of by a kind of prophetic anticipation.”

\* D. L. V. 2. p. 493.

It is of little moment in the present case what the Rabbins say. The argument, if it carries any weight with it, must proceed upon this supposition, that men were under no divine law, had no precepts of their duty given them by God, before the law was published from mount Sinai. Or at least, whatever precepts might be given them, they were not distinguished by the term here used, of a law. But neither of these points can be allowed him.

Gen. xxvi. 5. God says to Isaac, *I will bless thee—because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, ve-torathi, or torotki, and my law, or laws.*

THIS, we are sure, was long before the law of Moses was given; and therefore means probably some divine precepts of religion delivered down from Adam, or from Noah, to succeeding generations. These are what Job calls *the words of the Holy-one*, Chap. vi. 10. and remarkably, Ch. xxiii. 12. *the words of God's mouth*, which he esteemed more than his necessary food.

“AGAIN, (says Mr. W——) Job cries out  
“(Chap. xxix. 4.) *Oh that I were—as I was in the*  
“*days of my youth, when the SECRET OF GOD WAS*  
“*UPON MY TABERNACLE*, that is, in full security. Evi-  
“dently taken from the residence of the divine pre-  
“sence or *Shecinab*, in a visible form, on the ark, or  
“on the tent where the ark was placed.”\*

BUT where do we find in Scripture, that the *Shecinab*, or visible presence of God, is ever called *sed Elorab*, the secret of God? Or is it the word *tabernacle* that suggests this imaginary allusion? but this word is used throughout the book of Job for a *common house or dwelling*. And no wonder, since the fashion of the Arabians, from that time to this, has been: for the most part to dwell in tents or tabernacles.

THE word *sed* in Scripture signifies two things, either secret counsels, or the assembly where such consultations are held. In the former sense it is used, Amos iii. 7. *Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth*

\* D. L. V. 2. p. 494.



*his Secret (sod-o) to his servants the prophets.* In the latter sense it is used more frequently; as Psal. lxxxix. 8. *be-sod kedoshim, in the assembly of the saints.* Psal. cxi. 1. *be-sod jesbarim, in the assembly of the upright.* Jerem. vi. 11. *yal sod bachurim, upon the assembly of young men.* And so elsewhere.

AGREEABLY to this account then, *sod Eloah*, and *sod Jehovah*, in Scripture may signify two things; either the counsels and decrees of God's providence, which are secret with respect to us, any farther than he is pleased to reveal them: or else the assembly where these consultations (speaking after the manner of men) are held, and his decrees are passed.

In this latter sense it is plainly used, Jer. xxiii. 18. *For who hath stood in the council of the Lord (be-sod Jehovah) that is, in the assembly where God's consultations are held, and hath perceived and heard his word.*

In the same sense it is used, Job xv. 8. where Eliphaz asks Job, *Hast thou heard the secret of God* (the Hebrew is, *be-sod Eloah*, in the secret council or assembly of God) *and dost thou restrain* (rather, *hast thou drawn*) *wisdom to thyself?* That is, *Hast thou been admitted as a hearer in that great assembly where God's consultations are held? And hast thou drawn wisdom to thyself from thence?*

AND now if we understand the phrase in the same sense in this other place of Job, (for it occurs but twice in the whole book) we shall not only find the passage very intelligible, but an image rising to our view which is exceedingly grand and sublime. *Oh that I were as in months past,* (says Job) *as in the days when God preserved me—As I was in the days of my youth, or maturity, be-sod Eloah yale obal-i, when the council of God was over my tabernacle—i. e. When that august assembly, where God's counsels and decrees are passed, was held, as it were, over my habitation; and it seemed to be his peculiar care to prosper me and my family. When the Almighty was yet with me, (as he goes on) and my children were about me. ver. 5.*

THE Septuagint, and Symmachus\*, both preserve the sense, or come very near to it; but do not seem to have hit the height of the image.

I know there is another sense given by Grotius and bishop Patrick to this passage; but neither so suitable with the context, nor is the construction so natural. *When the secret of God was in my tabernacle*, that is, "When all my answers were held for oracles." But the preposition *by* *pal* does not signify *in*, but *over*, or *upon*.

AND yet even in this view, there is no necessity (as I apprehend) to suppose any allusion to the *Sheminah*, or visible presence of God in the tabernacle.

So that hitherto the learned writer's proofs, that the author of this book of Job was a Jew, and that he "unwarily betrayed his time and country," have been very slight. "But we shall now see (says he) that he "has made numerous allusions to the miraculous history of his ancestors with set purpose and design."†

WITH design of what? To betray his own times and country, as he had unwarily done in the instances before-mentioned? This were a strange conduct indeed.

NEVERTHELESS this was a refinement absolutely necessary (it seems) to an allegoric poem. Allusions must be drawn to the miraculous history of their ancestors; but then they must be "so lightly touched, "and so deeply shaded as to remain unobserved by an "inattentive reader; yet be visible enough to such as "studied the work with care and exactness."‡

I wish he had told us what could be the use of so refined a conduct. For to me, I own, it seems entirely wrong; and must of necessity defeat all the good purposes for which we can suppose the book to have been written.

HITHERTO it has been held as a rule by the critics, that in a poem, be there never so much fiction, there ought to be nothing that exceeded probability. But to

\* The Sept. *ὅτε δὲ θεὸς ἐπισκοπῆν ἐποιεῖτο τῷ οἴκῳ μου.* Symmach. *ὅποτε περιεφρασσεῖ δὲ θεὸς τὴν σκηνὴν μου.* † V. 2. p. 494. ‡ Ibid. p. 495.



make Job or his friends, in their speeches, allude to things that happened a thousand years after they were dead, is not only improbable, but monstrously unnatural: and if visible to those that studied the work with exactness; they must have a very ill taste, if they did not throw the book aside with contempt.

BUT to wave this matter at present, let us proceed to his designed allusions.

“THUS Job, (says he) Ch. ix. 7. speaking of the “omnipotence of God—*Which commandeth the sun, and “it riseth not: and sealeth up the stars*—alludes to the “miraculous history of the people of God, such as the “Egyptian darkness, and the stopping the sun’s course “by Joshua.” And then to strengthen his observation, he produces an idle conceit of a certain commentator, (and authorities like this are to be had in great plenty for almost any thing) that Job spoke this “proleptically, as knowing what God in a future age “would do”\*.

BUT sure there is no necessity from the words themselves to suppose any allusion of this kind, or indeed any thing miraculous: since God, by throwing a cloud over the sun and stars, can, and does obscure them, when he please. And thus it is, that the Chaldee paraphrast understands it, *Et stellas sigillat NUBIBUS, and seals up the stars with clouds*. Or if we will take bishop Patrick’s exposition, it is thus, That “the heavens are subject to the power of God; and “neither sun nor stars can shine if he forbid it.”

THERE is a beautiful fragment of Pindar, preserved to us by Clemens Alexandrinus, where he gives it as an instance of the power of God, that he can, when he will, bring light out of darkness, or throw a cloud over the brightest day.

Θεὸς δὲ δύναται ἐκ μελαίνης  
 Νυκτὸς αἰμίαντον ἄρσαι φῶς.  
 Κελαίνεσσι δὲ σκότει καλύψει  
 Καθαρὸν αἰμέρας σέλας.

\* Rather, *what God could do, if he would*. For this comes nearer the sense of Codrucus’s words cited by him in the margin.

THERE

THERE is just as much authority to say, that Pindar had here the story of Joshua, or the Egyptian darkness, in his thoughts, as the writer of the book of Job.

BUT next we have Job xxvi. 12. *He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.* Here, he tells us, "the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red-sea is plainly referred to."

BUT perhaps others may see nothing more in it, than the description of a storm or tempest.

THE Hebrew word, translated *divide*, is not the same which is used Exod. xiv. of the Red-sea; but signifies a violent breaking and tossing of the waves, as in a storm. And if the former part of the sentence mean, that God sometimes by his power raises a violent storm at sea; the latter may well enough be understood of the pride or swelling of the sea itself, allayed again by the same divine power and will that raised it. Though I suspect indeed, from the Use of the phrase elsewhere, that some ancient piece of history, much older than that of Pharaoh's overthrow in the Red-sea, may be here alluded to.

IF Egypt, for its pride, or strength, be once or twice called *רַבָּב* *rabab* in the scriptures; this is no argument that Egypt must be always meant, where-ever the word *proud*, or *rabab*, occurs.

"Again, Who can doubt (says he) but that the following words, *He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way*, (Job xii. 24.) allude to the wandering of the Israelites forty years in the wilderness, in punishment for their cowardice and diffidence in God's promises."

BUT any person may doubt it, and deny it too, who will be at the pains but to consult the Hebrew; for he will find that there is no mention of any wilderness or desert in this passage. The word (*תֹּבֹה*) *tobu* so rendered, properly signifies *confusion*; and is the very word used Gen. i. to express the *chaos*, before the world was brought into form. So that the persons here said to wander in a wilderness, were only bewildered



dered in a metaphorical sense. Moreover, the wandering of the Israelites was that of a whole people: this is only of the chief of the people.

PROCEED we to the next of these supposed allusions.

“Eliphaz, speaking of the wonderful works of God, declares how he came to the knowledge of them (Ch. xv. 17, 18.) *I will shew thee, hear me, and what I have seen I will declare: which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not bid it.* The very way (says he) that Moses directs to preserve the memory of the miraculous works of God.”

It is so—— And the very way that all the ancient history, and all the ancient wisdom, from the beginning of the world, was transmitted to posterity.

BUT he adds—— “And who are these wise men? They are so particularly marked out as not to be mistaken; *Unto whom the earth was given, and no stranger passeth among them.* (ver. 19.) A circumstance agreeing to no people whatsoever, but the Israelites settled in Canaan.”

BUT is Eliphaz here speaking of a Nation or people? No, he only speaks of wise men. And this could never be meant of the Israelites in general; whom the learned writer himself now and then represents as a gross sort of people.

I shall not perplex the reader or myself with the various conjectures of expositors, in order to shew who are meant by these wise men. They are so particularly marked out, as he observes, that one would think they could not easily be mistaken. And yet none of the commentators, that have come within my reach, seem to have been aware, that the characters here laid down so distinctly, can belong to none so properly, as to Noah and his sons; from whom in reality the ancient traditions were delivered down. And it is evident from the Scripture-history, that the earth was divided amongst these, that they were all of one family, and no stranger passed among them.

To proceed—  
UPON that of Eliphaz, (Ch. xxii. 6.) *Thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of his clothing*: as also a like sentence of Job, (Chap. xxiv. 7.) he observes, “Who that sees this ranked among the greatest enormities, but will reflect, that it must have been wrote by one studied in the law of Moses, which says, *If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down,*” &c.

BUT was this practice of taking a pledge peculiar to the Israelites? Or rather, was it not absolutely necessary in those early times, before they had the use of money, at least in any great plenty? For though the *Kesitah* said to be given to Job by each of his relations and acquaintance that came to visit him, Ch. xlii. 11. be supposed rightly rendered *a piece of money*, which nevertheless is a doubtful point\*; yet by their presenting him with only a single piece, we may conclude that money was in those days a great rarity: and therefore we find no mention of it where the wealth of Job is reckoned up, but only of droves of oxen, sheep,

\* There are but three places in Scripture, where the word *קֶסֶיטָה* occurs, viz. Gen. xxxiii. 19. Josh. xxiv. 32. and this of Job. In the first it is said, that *Jacob bought a parcel of a field—at the hand of the children of Hamor Sechem's father, for an hundred Kesita*. In the second, that *the bones of Joseph were buried in this parcel of ground bought for an hundred Kesita*. The question is, Whether these *Kesitas* were pieces of money, or so many lambs or young sheep, as the Chaldee Paraphrast turns the word. It seems to favour the latter sense, that the ancient way of payment in silver was by weight or shekels uncoined in Abraham's time, and farther down. Beside, if the *Kesita* were (as some of the Rabbins say) an Arabic coin, of the same value with the Hebrew *Gherah*, that is, three half-pence English, (see Brerewood *de ponderibus & pretiis*, &c.) It looks very improbable that Job's relations should make him so slight a present. On the other hand, if all Job's acquaintance, *col jodeyav*, all that knew him, (says the text) and no doubt but his acquaintance was very large, brought him a young sheep each, it would set him up with a good flock at once. And thus the accurate Pagninus rendered the words *kesitah cchath, pecudem unam*; which is wrongly thrown out of the text by A. Montanus. But he has been justly censured for his frequent blunders in the same way.



camels, &c. agreeable to the simplicity of those very ancient times.

Now when all commerce in a manner was transacted without money, and chiefly by an exchange of one commodity for another, the taking of a pledge must of necessity happen very frequently; a proper exchange not being to be had. This therefore would make the custom as common in Arabia as in Judea: and I conceive, any hard usage to the poor in this way was as much to be condemned in the one country as the other.

WE now come to a passage which the author lays great stress upon, and where he thinks he has found the story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery.

"Elihu, (says he) speaking of God's dealing with his servants, says,— *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man: He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain. His soul draweth nigh unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one amongst a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousness.* (Job xxxiii. 17, et seq.) This (says the learned writer,) is the most circumstantial account of God's dealing with Hezekiah, as it is told in the books of Chronicles and Kings." \*

THAT there is a likeness of circumstances may be allowed: but then we say, that it is a most circumstantial account of the way of curing diseases in those ancient times; and so may be reckoned as one, and no inconsiderable mark of the antiquity of the book. For it shews the book to have been written, or, at least,

\* D. L. V. 2, p. 497.

the story of it to bear date, before physick was studied so as to become a distinct profession; and when distempers, according to the simplicity of the first ages, were looked on as inflictions from the hand of God, for the sins of men; and therefore the messenger of God, the interpreter of his will, or the prophet, was to be applied to for the cure of them. And in this view, it is no wonder if the circumstances fall in very naturally with the story of Hezekiah, who was so remarkably restored by the prophet Isaiah.

HOWEVER that there can be no allusion here intended to the recovery of Hezekiah, which was a single and extraordinary instance, seems plain. For Elihu tells us in the following verses, that this way of recovering from diseases was then common and usual; ver. 29, 30. *Lo all these things worketh God OFTENTIMES with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*

INSTEAD OF OFTENTIMES, the Hebrew indeed is THREE TIMES, a certain number for an uncertain: and it is said to be God's usual way of dealing with the same person, to raise him once, twice, and thrice perhaps, or oftener, from the bed of sickness. But though we read of many extraordinary cures in the Bible; yet (I think) there is no one instance of the same person's having received this special favour above once.

THERE is a passage in the 107<sup>th</sup> Psalm, not very unlike to this of Job; and yet I suppose no one will think it has any respect to the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah: especially if the Psalm be David's, as seems not improbable. The whole of it is an admirable composition, not unworthy the pen of the royal prophet. But whoever were the author, the words ver. 17, &c. are these:

*Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.*

18, *Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death.*

19. *Then*



19. *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, He saveth them out of their distresses.*

20. *He sends his WORD and healeth them, and delivereth them from their destructions.*

THIS description suits Hezekiah's case, I think, near as well as the other. And yet that the Psalmist, whoever he was, could not have Hezekiah's case in his thoughts, seems plain: because if he had, he would, no doubt, for decency's sake, have avoided the first word in the description, *Fools because, &c.* That he had this very passage of Job in his thoughts, seems highly probable; since he has borrowed from this same chapter of Job the 40th verse of the psalm, word for word. As bishop Hare observes, upon the place.

I HAVE thus considered all the material passages (and indeed more than are material) produced by the learned writer, to shew that there are in the book of Job designed allusions to the Jewish law or history.

As for the two or three more that follow (p. 498.) such as these—*In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight and pass away.—— And— From the wicked their light is with-holden.——* Which he would interpret as allusions to the story of Sennacherib, or the Egyptian darkness, &c. All I shall say, is, Had it been certain that the book of Job was written after the times of Pharaoh and Sennacherib, such an application might be tolerated. But at present it is without necessity or foundation.

IN short, if it were allowable to apply such general passages as these, which suit a million of occurrences, to any one particular event, and so draw an argument from thence of the date of any book; I think we should make but wild work with the writings of the ancients: for any thing may be proved in this way, by the help of a strong fancy.

S E C T. III.

“WE now come closer to the question, (says  
“Mr. W—— p. 500.) and having pro-  
“ved the book of Job to be written under the Mo-  
“saic œconomy,” (*viz.* from some supposed allusions  
to the Jewish law or history, which I have shewn to  
be imaginary,) “we say, it must be somewhere be-  
“tween the time of their approaching captivity, and  
“their thorough re-establishment in Judea. This is  
“the largest period we can give it.”

HIS reason for this is, “because no other period  
“can possibly be assigned for the grand question hand-  
“led in this Book ever coming into dispute, (*viz.*)  
“whether God administers his government over men  
“here with an equal providence,” or unequal——  
“This (he says) could be no question any where out  
“of the land of Judea—— Nor there neither, in any  
“period of the Jewish nation, either before or after  
“that in which he places it.”\*

THAT “of this period there are three portions:  
“1. The time immediately preceding the captivity;  
“2. The duration of it; and 3. The return from it.”

To the opinions that place it in either of the two  
first, he allows there are unanswerable objections. So  
that there remains only the third portion of this period;  
and here it is he fixes the date of the book. “We  
“say then, (says he, pag. 503.) to come home to the  
“question, that the book of Job was written some  
“time between the return and thorough settlement of  
“the Jews in their own country.”

HIS proof of this is built partly on what he suppo-  
ses to be the subject of the book, or the question hand-  
led in it, but chiefly on the allegorical turn he would  
give to it. He fancies a likeness betwixt the case of  
Job and that of the Jewish people on their return from  
the captivity of Babylon, and therefore Job in the  
poem must stand as their representative. The vexa-

\* *Div. Leg. V. 2. p. 501.*



tions and disturbances given them in the building their city and temple by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, are represented by the troublesome accusations and impertinencies of Job's three friends or miserable comforters. Job's wife and daughters are likewise brought into the scene, to represent the bad wives but innocent daughters of those returning Jews. Ezra, the supposed author of the book, has likewise his representative in Elihu. In a word, and to compleat the whole, there is a vision of Zechariah, (Ch. iii.) where *Joshua the high-priest appears standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan at his right hand to resist him——clothed with filthy garments, which are taken from him, and change of raiment put on him, &c.* \* And here, we are told, "Job's whole dramatic life lies in its *Stamina*." For as Job represents the Jewish people in the poem, so Joshua the high-priest does in the vision. "*Satan standing at the angel's right hand to resist Joshua* is, "when drawn out more at length, his persecution of "Job.—*Joshua clothed with filthy garments*, is Job "amongst the ashes. *The clothing Joshua with change "of raiment, and setting a fair mitre on his head*, is Job's "returning prosperity. *And the angel of the Lord standing by*, is God's interposition from the whirlwind." p. 530.

THIS resemblance betwixt the vision and the poem hit the learned writer's imagination so strongly, that he pronounces it "alone sufficient to confirm the truth "of his whole interpretation, and to convince the "most incredulous." p. 529.

WE see here then the substance of his proof that the book of Job is no older than the time of Ezra: and that it rests upon these two points, his notion of an equal providence under the Mosaic dispensation; and that of the book's being an allegorical dramatic poem, where, exactly contrary to the usual method of the drama, ancient personages are put to represent the modern; or rather, an ancient and a modern story are confounded together.

\* Zech. iii. 1, 3, 4.

NOW if it should appear, that the author is mistaken in both these particulars, I hope we may have leave still to believe the book of Job to be of that antiquity, which has been hitherto allowed it by the best critics and divines. As such, it is, without all controversy, abstracted from the consideration of its authority as an inspired writing, one of the most instructive, and most valuable books, that the world has ever seen. But if reduced to the low date at which the learned writer sets it, and viewed in the light wherein he has placed it; I think it must sink in its value in proportion.

LET us go back then, and consider with attention what he has offered upon each of these heads.

AND first he argues, that the book of Job must have been written at some time within the period of the "approaching captivity of the Jews, and their thorough re-establishment in Judea." And that for this reason; because "no other period can possibly be assigned for the grand question, handled in this book, ever coming into dispute." p. 500.

THE Question he supposes to be this—"Whether God administers his government over men here with an equal providence, so as that the good are always prosperous, and the bad unhappy; or whether, on the contrary, there be not such apparent inequalities, as that prosperity and adversity often happen indifferently to good and bad." Job (says he) maintains the latter part of the question, and his three friends the former. They argue these points throughout the whole dispute, and each party sticks firm to his first opinion.\*

WHETHER this be a true account of the matter, we shall see hereafter: but he proceeds,

"Now this could never have been made matter of dispute, from the most early supposed time of Job's existence even to ours, in any place out of the land of Judea; the administration of providence, which, throughout this period, all ages and countries have

\* V. 2. p. 501.

expe-



“experienced, being visibly and confessedly *unequal*,  
 “Men, indeed, at all times, have been indiscreetly  
 “prone to enquire how this inequality could be made  
 “consistent with God’s justice and goodness: but, in  
 “all the vast variety of human opinions, as extrava-  
 “gant as many of those are which philosophic men  
 “have some time or other held, we do not find any of  
 “them ever conceived or maintained that *God’s provi-*  
 “*dence was equally administred*. This therefore, as we  
 “say, could be no question any where out of the land  
 “of Judea.” p. 501.

HERE then we have a plain confession, that there is something so very strange in this notion of an *equal providence*, that to maintain that it has existed any where out of the land of Judea, would be the height of extravagance. It is a known saying, that there is nothing so absurd, but that it has been held by some or other of the philosophers. But here, it seems, is an absurdity that never yet found a patron or advocate. \*

“As  
 \* Perhaps I ought not to conceal however from the reader, that the Talmudists and Jewish Rabbins, some of them (who far outwent the philosophers, if not all mankind, in the extravagance of their notions) seem to have entertained an opinion, as if God, by a continued miracle, supplied every “Israelite with whatever he  
 “could wish for, as long as he continued in his obedience to the  
 “divine will: so that if one person wanted rain for his ground,  
 “and his neighbour did not; it should rain upon the ground of the  
 “first, and not of the latter. Nay, in the same field or garden, if  
 “one herb wanted water, and another not; it should rain upon  
 “the herb that wanted it, and not upon the other.”

I take this from Rabbi David Kimchi, in his commentary upon Zechar. x. 2. who with great simplicity gives it us, I can’t say as his own opinion, but as a tradition from their ancestors of pious memory. *Quin et tale quid a majoribus nostris (pia illis quidem memorie) proditum extat, hujusmodi Dei Opt. Max. ingenium et indolem esse, ut quantisper Israelitæ divinæ suæ voluntati se inresque suas accommodarent, is vicissim illorum votis respondeat; adeoque si uni alicui plurimū opus fuerit, alteri vero non itidem, apud unum solum plurimæ locus futurus sit. Imo si in agro aliquo hortove hæc herba aqua indiguerit, illa non itidem, fore ut altera sola compluatur.*

And so ’tis plain, that heathenish observation could have no place here, *Ovdi yae o Ziv, ed’ ur wailac ardam, ur anxon*. For rain, or not rain, when and where it would, it was always so distributed (it seems) as to answer to the wishes of each particular person; and so all must needs be pleased.

There

“As extravagant as many of the opinions of philosophic men have been, yet none of them (says he) ever conceived or maintained, *that God's providence was equally administred.*”

Now when he had asserted such a thing of the land of Judea, which, to maintain of any other land or country, would have been extravagant beyond example; might we not reasonably have expected, that he should have produced some clear proofs of it; at least, that he should have shewn it to be possible? \* No, we are to wait

There is a text indeed of the prophet Amos, quoted by Mr. W— (V. 2. p. 436.) which, by being misunderstood, might give occasion to this *delirium* of the Jewish doctors; and perhaps they meant it as a comment upon that text, but it is a very wild one.

Mr. W— introduces the passage (with a little too much solemnity, I think) thus— “But God, by the prophet Amos, describes this administration of providence in the fullest manner—” *And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest, and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered. So two or three cities were dried unto one city to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, &c.”* Amos iv. 7—11.

Upon a careful examination of this passage, I believe we shall find nothing in it that either favours the notion of the Jewish Rabbins abovementioned, or Mr. W—'s of an *equal providence*.

The prophecy (as appears from ver. 1.) is against the Israelites of Samaria, &c. He puts them in mind of their unlawful worship at Bethel and Gilgal, and (ver. 6.) says expressly, that God had given them *cleanness of teeth*, or a dearth and scarcity, in ALL their cities, (כָּל עִירָם) and *want of bread in ALL their places*. So that, though it might rain upon one city, and not upon another, yet still there was a want in all.

If there was any thing miraculous in it (as there must be, if it rained exactly upon the grounds of the good alone, and not upon those of their bad neighbours) then it is plain, this single miracle can be no proof at all of the general course of providence with respect to the Jews or Israelites.

By questioning the possibility of an equal providence, I would not be understood to limit the almighty power of God, as if he could not make what changes he pleased in the nature of things. I only mean, that it seems a thing impossible, (or inconceivable at least) considering the general state of the world as it is at present, and as it ever has been in all ages and nations, the Jewish not excepted, viz. good and bad men mixed together in the same society, indued with the same natural affections and sensations, and the same liberty



wait for this, it seems, till the other volume comes. At present we are only told, that the theocracy requires it, and that holy Scripture represents it so. And yet where he attempts to explain this *equal providence*, and to reconcile it with the several intimations of an inequality to be met with in the Old Testament; I think he has explained it quite away, and shewn it to be, in effect, impossible. For even in the land of Judea, he supposes that "God's extraordinary providence" to the state might (and did) sometimes clash with "that to particulars, as in the plague for numbering the people." *D. L. V. 2. p. 444.*

AND it is certain, that common calamities, where good and bad fall undistinguished, are a demonstration against all that can be said for an *equal providence* exactly administered to particular persons in Judea, or any where else. Nay this is what the Scripture itself teaches us, Jer. xlv. 4, 5. *Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land: and seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not, says God to Baruc.* Plainly intimating, that it was a very wild and unreasonable thing for good men, even under that dispensation, to think their goodness should exempt them from bearing a share in the miseries and distresses of their country. And though Baruc indeed is afterward promised to have his life spared in the general desolation, yet it is promised in such a manner, as to shew that it was an extraordinary favour, a single instance of exemption, such as neither himself, nor any other good man, without some special revelation, could have reason to expect. ver. 5. *For behold I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith*

liberty of acting. For in such a case, I think, it must of necessity happen that good men will suffer much from the bad, and bad men receive great benefit from the good; and both without their deserts. And this way of thinking seems not only warranted from observation, but from what we know of God's actual dealing with his creatures. For when a part of the angels rebelled, they were banished from heaven to secure the happiness of the others. And when the final retribution shall be made, there will be an everlasting separation of the good and bad.

the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.

Is then the extraordinary providence to the state, under the Mosaic œconomy, might and did clash with that to particulars; and, without a continued miracle, must necessarily do so; what becomes of that providence which he contends for, “*equally dispensing temporal rewards and punishments both to the community and to particulars?*” For this is his tenet, and these are his words, where he gives us the summary of the contents of book 5. sect. 4. \*

FROM the contradictions therefore and confusion which the learned writer falls into in treating this point of an *equal providence*, I conclude that the whole is a mere dream, and that this could never make the question in dispute betwixt Job and his friends.

AND, by the way, supposing we should allow such an *equal providence* to have been administred in Judea; yet since he himself reckons it the utmost extravagance to suppose it any where else; what an idea does he give us of the talents of Ezra? Who, according to him, has introduced persons who were no Jews, debating a question so palpably absurd, as that it never entered into the head of any one man living, to make a question of it out of the land of Judea; consequently could not, with the least probability or propriety, be handled by any but Jews. Is this like one, who, he would make us to believe, was a “careful observer of *decorum*?†” Certainly the rule of *decorum* would have obliged him—*Reddere personæ, &c.* as Horace speaks—either to look out for proper persons to debate his question, or to fit his question to the persons. But what has Job of the land of Uz,

\* So V. 2. p. 452. He supposes the Jews to have lived under such an *equal providence*, as that no transgressor could escape punishment, nor any observer of the law miss of his reward.

I know the author sometimes changes the term of an *equal providence* for that of an extraordinary or peculiar providence, which (I believe) all Christians allow of. Though, I dare say, not in his sense, so as to confound it with a constant *equal providence dispensing temporal rewards and punishments both to the community and to particulars*, in a manner so exact, as that no transgressor could escape punishment, nor any observer of the law miss of his reward.

† V. 2. p. 494.



or Eiphaz the Temanite, and the rest of them, to do with a question that could not possibly have any place out of the land of Judea?

I CONCLUDE therefore, that had Ezra designed such an allegorical poem as is here supposed, he would have turned over the history of his own people, to find a proper story, and proper persons for his dialogue. Though, to give my sentiments freely, I believe such a poem as this was never heard or thought of in the times of Ezra, nor for many ages after.

LET us see however what the learned writer has produced in favour of it; and I love to take down his arguments in his own words: for they have something so peculiar in them, that I am always afraid of mistaking his meaning, when I forsake his words.

AFTER giving some account of the distressed condition of the Jews upon their return from the captivity—from “the bad situation of affairs without, the “walls of Jerusalem being broken down,” &c. and “the bad situation of affairs within, several disorders “contrary to the law having crept in amongst them— “and what would infinitely increase the confusion, a “future state of rewards and punishments being not “yet become a popular doctrine amongst them.”— I say, after giving this account (partly real, partly imaginary) of the condition and circumstances of the Jews of those times, he thus proceeds, p. 505.

“COULD any thing therefore be conceived more “seasonable and necessary at this time, than such a “work as the book of Job? In which, on a traditional “story of great fame and reputation all over the East, “a good man was represented as afflicted for the trial “of his virtue, and rewarded for his afflictions: and in “which their doubts about God’s providence were piously resolved into his almighty power. For to quiet “all their anxieties, and to comfort them under their “present distresses, was, I suppose, the reason of one “of their prophet’s composing the book of Job at this “very period.

“BUT if such was the end of writing this poetic “story, we cannot but suppose every thing in it would “be

“ be fitted to the circumstances of those times. But  
 “ this could not be done without making the poem  
 “ ALLEGORICAL as well as dramatic. That is, re-  
 “ presenting the real persons of that age under the per-  
 “ sons of the drama. And this according to the ex-  
 “ actest rules of good writing. For when some gene-  
 “ ral moral, fit for all times, is to be recommended,  
 “ it is best shewn in a simple dramatic image : but  
 “ when the author’s purpose is to convey some pecu-  
 “ liar circumstantial truths, they have need to be in-  
 “ forced in allegorical representations. And in fact,  
 “ we shall find this poem to be wholly allegorical.  
 “ The reason is convincing. There are divers circum-  
 “ stances added to each character, which can, by no  
 “ means, belong to the persons representing : we con-  
 “ clude, therefore, that others are meant under those  
 “ characters, as the persons represented. Nor did the  
 “ author seem much solicitous to conceal his purpose,  
 “ while, in his introduction to some of Job’s speeches,  
 “ he expresses himself thus, *Moreover Job continued his*  
 “ *parable and said.* (Ch. xxvii. 1. Ch. xxix. 1.) Which  
 “ word *parable* properly signifies, in Scripture, the re-  
 “ presenting one thing by another. And in this sense  
 “ we shall find the speeches of Job extremely *parabo-*  
 “ *lical.*”

AND so he proceeds to examine each character apart—

THIS then is the substance of what he has offer’d in favour of his allegorical interpretation of this book.

LET us begin with the last and weightiest argument, his criticism upon the word PARABLE ; in the Hebrew, *Masbal*,

THE word is the same which is used in Scripture for a *proverb*, and is the very title given the book of Proverbs. According to this title then, and the learned writer’s interpretation of it, we might expect that every sentence there should be a *parable*, or *allegory*, a representing one thing by another.

BUT if we recur to the etymology of the word,\*

\* *Masbal*, from the Verb מָשַׁל *maschal* dominatus est.



we shall find it means no more than a powerful or commanding sentence or speech: being derived from a verb, which signifies to command, to bear rule, or sway. And a good speaker, in those ancient times, had, no doubt, a great command in their assemblies; for eloquence is very powerful.

THE Proverbs of Solomon are called *Mesbalim*, for no other reason but for the weight and authority which they carry with them: for, as to other things, we know that some are delivered in plain, some in figurative expressions; some in similies, and some without.

A BOOK of sentences of Epicurus, † of so much authority with his followers, that they used to get it by heart, was for the same reason (as I take it) called *κρίσεις δοξαι*, an expression exactly answering to the Hebrew word *Mesbalim*, and rendered by Tully, *sententiae maximè ratæ*.

WITH the same regard to the original idea of the word, a *taunting domineering speech*, or *by-word*, is likewise called *masbal*: as Ps. xlv. 15. *Thou hast made us a by-word among the heathen*.

AND for the same reason, a song of victory, or a triumphal speech in a good cause, is also called *Masbal*, as Isa. xiv. 4. where our translators, *Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressors ceased, &c.* But this proverb, (*bam-masbal ha-zé*) as appears by what follows, is no other than a triumphal song, or speech, and that as noble a one as ever was composed, from ver. 4. to the 23<sup>d</sup> of that chapter.

AND here we are brought home— By Job's continuing his *parable*, is only meant, that he went on in a triumphant way of speech, like one who had got the better of the argument; as he certainly had. For though his antagonists might not be convinced, they were put to silence at least, and had nothing to reply — And so much for this piece of criticism.

† Quis enim vestrum (says Tully to Torquatus, de Finibus Lib. 2.) non edidit Epicuri κρίσεις δοξας, id est, sententias maximè ratas? quia gravissimæ sunt ad beate vivendum breviter enunciatae sententiæ.

As to the rest of the argument, the author's way of thinking seems to me very extraordinary.

HE first supposes all the encouragement or consolation, which the Jews could draw from this book, to depend upon the truth of the history, *viz.* the instance of "a good man afflicted for the tryal of his virtue;" and this taken from "a traditional story of great fame "and reputation over all the East."

AND yet, presently after, he supposes it necessary for the obtaining of this end, that the story should be thrown into an allegory or fiction. That is, "to fit "it to the circumstances of those times, the real persons of that age must be represented under the persons of the drama."

Now this, in my Judgment, as far as it was seen through, must needs render the poem of no use at all: For they must perceive, that it was impossible there could be any truth in it (at least, any truth to be depended upon, where things were thus confusedly mixed) and then, what hope or encouragement could they draw from it?

TAKE the story for a true story, and here is a noble example of God's interposing to deliver a good man from the deepest distress, when his condition was, in a manner, hopeless. And an instance of what has been done affords abundantly more satisfaction, than the best representation of what can or may be done.

BUT take the poem in the other light, as an allegoric fiction; and what could it possibly afford, beside a very odd amusement? For the truth of history is destroyed: and we have nothing in the room of it, but a monstrous jumble of times and persons brought together, that were in reality separated from each other by the distance of a thousand or twelve hundred years. There may be some art in this, such as it is; but I am sure, there is no nature.

HAD the author been able to produce but one precedent of this sort among the writings of the ancients, it might have afforded some countenance to his opinion? but, I believe, it would be difficult to find it.



HE seems indeed to consider the *Æneid* in this light: for he tells us, (*D. L. V. i. p. 185.*) "Every one saw that Augustus was shadowed in the person of *Æneas*."

How far this shadowing may extend, I know not. But if it be meant, that the story of Augustus was intended to be given us under that of *Æneas*, or that Virgil designed a picture of the one hero for the other; I suppose Servius, or Donatus, or some ancient critic or commentator, would not have failed to acquaint us with a particular so extraordinary. If they have not done it; their silence is to me a better proof for the negative, than a bare imagination or unauthorized assertion of twenty modern writers for the affirmative.

THAT the *Æneid* was intended as a compliment to that emperor seems plain, indeed, from the design of it, which was to celebrate the author of the Julian family. And moreover the poet has taken care to introduce Augustus himself in the only point of view that was natural, I mean by way of prediction, in two several places, *viz.* in the speech of Anchises, book the sixth, and the description of the shield, book the eighth. And here he has not failed to adorn his patron with the best colourings of his pencil. This he knew well how to do; and it was all that he needed to do, or (I think) could possibly intend.

For the rest, it is very remarkable with what diligence he has picked up every little circumstance of the character and story of *Æneas*, that had been delivered down by writing or tradition, and was proper to be inserted into his poem; with a design to give it at least an air of truth, which he knew was absolutely necessary to recommend it to the judicious reader. But to suppose that he was all this while only working up an image of Augustus, or of any other man, is to undo all this again, and turn the whole into a monster of a fiction.

BESIDE that, there is, in reality, very little similitude in the stories of these two princes, and still less in the

the manners of those distant times wherein they lived, whereon to ground so strange a project. So that a poet who should go about to shadow the one by the other, (I must keep to the terms for fear this shadow should slip from me) or to blend the characters together in the same person, and raise an awkward picture out of both, would only make his hero and himself ridiculous.

THIS, at least, appears to me to be the case. And though I should be loth to differ in opinion from all the world beside, in a matter of never so little consequence; yet if the learned writer's every one be only John Dryden, or a few French critics of the last age, I am in no pain about disagreeing in sentiment with these.

THE ingenious Mon<sup>sieur</sup> abbe Pluche has a severe censure upon the ill taste of his own countrymen, who, amongst the extravagant honours paid their grand monarque Louis XIV. had set up his figure over one of the gates of Paris, naked, with a vast herculean club in his hand, and a full-bottomed peruke falling down his shoulders.\*

THE gentleman that devised this, intended it, no doubt, as an allegorical sculpture. Here is Louis XIV. represented by Hercules— Or Hercules by Louis XIV. —No matter which. Look at the head, you see the one; look at the hands, you see the other: It is Louis— or Hercules— or both—— or neither. *Ælia Lælia Crispis*— Πρόσθε λέων, ὅπισθεν δὲ δράκων——

SUCH an allegorical poem, as is here contended for, seems to be very much in the goût of this famous French sculpture. It is the full-bottomed wigg joined with Hercules's club.

BUT thus much for the thing in general—— Let us now attend the author in examining each particular character of this supposed allegorical drama.

\* *Ab. Pluche's* words are these— Far from admiring, we look with an eye of pity and scorn upon a publick sculpture, wherein a King, whose memory is dear to us, is exposed quite naked amidst his people, with a heavy club in his hand, and wearing a full-bottom'd wigg. *Hist. of the Heavens*, V. 2. p. 273. *Engl. translation.*



## S E C T. IV.

THE learned writer's argument, to prove the book of Job to be an allegorical as well as a dramatic composition, is this; That "there are diverse circumstances added to each character, which can, by no means, belong to the persons representing," viz. Job and his friends: and "therefore others are meant under those characters as the persons represented," viz. the Jewish people, and their adversaries Sanballat, Tobiah, &c. This he endeavours to shew under each character.

AND first for that of Job—— "As this heroe of the poem (says he) was a real person; and so famed all over the East for his exemplary patience in afflictions that it became proverbial,\* we can never account for his behaviour, when we find him breaking out, ever and anon, into such excesses of impatience, as border even upon blasphemy. We conclude therefore that from this book the fame of so great patience could never have arose.— The writing then and the tradition being so entirely inconsistent, we must needs conclude some other character to be shadowed under that of Job.

"AND this, I say, was no other than the Jewish people," &c. †

I KNOW not how this argument may appear to others; but to me it has a strange aspect, and makes Ezra as strange a dramatic poet.

To represent the murmuring and impatient Jews, it seems he takes a person who was so exemplary for the contrary quality, that his patience was become proverbial: and then, to adapt him to his purpose, makes him break out, ever and anon, into such excesses of impatience as border even upon blasphemy. Certainly the tradition must have been otherwise in Ezra's time than in St. James's, and perhaps the pro-

\* *Ye have heard of the patience of Job.* Jam. v. 11.

† V. 2. p. 507.

verb might run thus : — *You have heard of the impatience of Job.* For he would never have put light to represent darkness ; or made darkness of it, and yet still called it light.

I FREELY own therefore, that I am quite surfeited with this character already, and could almost resolve to pursue it no farther : the absurdity of the thing being, to a plain understanding, a sufficient confutation of it.

BUT though little regard be due to this untoward argument, there is something due to the real character of Job as he appears in this sublime poem, wherein every thing, I shall take leave to say, is as natural as it is noble.

AND therefore I must observe in favour of him, that a candid reader, who considers the depth of his distress, will allow him the liberty of complaining, without taxing him with those excesses of impatience, which the learned writer, to support a favourite hypothesis, hath thought fit to ascribe to him, but which he would find it difficult to prove. He forgets that human nature in those days was human nature, before the Stoic apathy was ever dreamt of, or an artificial polish had overspread the manners of men. What the heart felt, the tongue uttered ; and mens sentiments and passions were as visible as their faces. Some allowance therefore should undoubtedly be made for the open, undisguised simplicity of those ancient times.

I MUST add, that though Job breaks out, now and then, into bitter complaints of the misery of his condition, and even sometimes expostulates with God in a manner unbecoming that awful distance which should be observed betwixt a creature and his creator ; yet I can see nothing of what the learned writer charges him with, “ Things bordering upon blasphemy.” He points at Ch. xxxiii. 10. *Behold he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy.* But be these words never so exceptionable, they are not taken from the speeches of Job, but only charged upon him by Elihu, who might very possibly mistake or misrepresent him.

THIS



THIS speaker, though less partial than the others, is however too severe in the construction which he puts upon Job's words. The first branch of this sentence, *Behold he findeth occasions against me*, is not to be found in Job's speeches. And as for the other which occurs Ch. xiii. 24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?* Though there may be something faulty in the expostulation, yet it is very much alleviated by those expressions of humility and self-abasement which immediately precede and follow it. For with the context it is thus,

Ver. 23, 24, 25.

*How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin.*

*Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?*

*Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? Wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?*

SCARCE ever were the feelings of the human heart, oppressed with such a load of grief, expressed in a more natural or less blameable way: and I could almost recall the concession I had made of any thing wrong at all in it. For if it be a rule of equity to put the best construction upon words and things that they will bear; Job seems, in the first part, to wish that God would discover to him the particular sins, if any, for which he thus afflicted him, and he was ready to deplore them, and to correct his errors for the future. In the second, the exceptionable part, he seems, nevertheless, to account it the greatest of his calamities, that God should hide his face from him, and deal with him as an enemy; whose friendship and favour he had always set the highest value on, had endeavoured to conciliate and preserve it by the integrity of his life, and was resolved never to depart from that integrity. In the last part, he confesses his own meanness, or rather nothingness in comparison of God, and that in a manner so ingenuous and simple, as to shew that his complaints, however passionate and moving, had but a small mixture (for I must not venture

ture to say none) of pride or stubbornness at the bottom of them.

THE most exceptionable passage that I have been able to observe in all Job's speeches, is that at Chap. xxx. 21. *Thou art become cruel to me, with thy strong band thou opposest thyself against me.*

HERE indeed seems to be a great want of decency, or of delicacy at least, in the expression, if the Hebrew words carry the same force with the English. But the turn of the sentence in the original is somewhat different, and is literally thus—*Thou art become cruel to me, with thy strong band thou hatest me.*

THE learned Schultens, who (I know not why) loves to aggravate every bold expression of Job's, tells us that the word *Satam*, here used, *signat odium acerrimum et implacabile, denotes the most bitter and implacable hatred.* Be it so; yet to hate with the hand, surely, is something very different from hating with the heart; and is a plain direction to us how the passage ought to be understood, *viz. Thou hast dealt with me as if thou hatest me, or as men use to deal with those they hate.*

As for the other expression, *tebapec le-aczar l-i, thou art become cruel to me*; it is remarkable, that the very same word is used, Jerem. xxx. 14. where God himself declares how he had dealt with his own people, and expresses it in the following terms, *I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, aczari.* What shall we say? Does the Hebrew word carry a softer sense than the English? Or have we softer ears than the ancients? Or is there a mixture of both in the case?

IT is not my purpose to vindicate every daring thought or ardent expression which occurs in the speeches of this afflicted man. But we shall certainly judge amiss, if we think every thing wrong, which will not suit with the politeness of our manners. If we flatter our selves that we excel in this respect, it is certain we fall short in others: and it were happy for us, if with Job's simplicity we could reach those noble heights of piety, which



which are so conspicuous in his speeches, and his character throughout. Let us set the one therefore over-against the other.

SOME of his commentators indeed have fallen very hard upon him, and given him little better quarter than his three friends. It is well for him, that he had a better advocate to plead his cause than any of them. For as to any thing highly criminal in Job's speeches, it is what the infallible judge himself acquits him of; where, with respect to what had been said on both sides, we find him declaring, once and again, that *Job had spoken of him the thing that was right, and that the three friends had not.* (Ch. xlii. 7, 8.)

I SHOULD therefore here have done with the learned writer's argument from the character of Job; but that his reasoning being founded chiefly in the inconsistencies which he thinks he has espied in the character, and these arguing some imperfection in the book, (according to our idea of it at least, who are too dull-sighted to perceive the allegory) it may be necessary to consider, and to clear them up, if I can.

"THE great point Job insists upon (says he) throughout the whole book, is his innocence: and yet, to our surprise, we hear him, in one place, thus expostulating with God, *Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*"\* This can be accounted for no other-  
"wise than by understanding it of the (Jewish) people. †

AND why so? May not the best man that ever lived find something to condemn in the levities of his youth, or when he was a boy or child? For the Hebrew word sometimes denotes a state of childhood; and therefore there be those who have explained it of our original corruption, upon which they suppose Job here to lay the cause of his afflictions ‡. But we may allow him to have had respect to some actual sins of

\* Job. xiii. 26. † V. 2. p. 507, 508. ‡ Corruptionis natura, quæ puero nascenti inhæret, penam me hereditare facis. Schultens in loc. See Dr. Grey's Job.

his youth, without any detriment to his argument drawn from that present uprightness of heart and life, which he now pleads, and had long practised. For, by the way, it is not his innocence, strictly speaking, which Job insists on, but his integrity.

THERE is but one other inconsistency alledged (I think) that is worth the taking notice of; and this we have p. 509. "Job speaking of his misfortunes, says, *For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet, yet trouble came.* (Ch. iii. 25, 26.) But in other places he speaks very differently. He wishes he *were as in months past*, for then (says he) *I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.* (Ch. xxix. 18.) And again, *When I looked for good, then evil came upon me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.* (Ch. xxx. 26.) These things (says the learned writer) are entirely discordant, if understood of one and the same person."

PERHAPS not—— For though I might insist upon it as a thing very pardonable, and not at all unnatural, for a person under an excessive load of grief to forget himself a little, and to talk inconsistently, especially at the distance of so many chapters; yet I shall waive this plea, because I think there is an easy way of reconciling these passages. If we suppose, for instance, that the fear and disquiet expressed in the first of them, was a fear for his children; and the hope and confidence expressed in the two latter, was such as flowed from a conscience of his own integrity, and sincere endeavour to discharge his duty.

I SAY, a fear for his children—— For what other thing can we reasonably suppose to have created him such incessant anxiety? What was it he could be so much afraid of that was now come upon him? Not the loss of his cattle, surely: This to so good a man would be of less consideration. Nor yet the disease of his body: for this being a sudden and supernatural stroke, I suppose he felt no symptom of it before it came.



came. The loss of his children then seems to be the only possible thing that can be here meant.

THE learned Schultens indeed\* supposes this fear of Job's to refer to the unjust suspicions of his friends, and the calumnies they were about to bestow upon him. But the friends, as yet, had said never a word to him; and I see not how he could guess at their thoughts by their silence. Beside, it is evident that the accusations of his friends, (which Eliphaz begun, though very softly, in the next speech) was a very surprizing and unexpected thing to Job, and made way for all that vehemence of dispute which after followed.

I AM persuaded therefore, that the thing which Job meant here as the greatest of his fears, and which was now come upon him, was the loss of his children; for whom an over-tender parent is in continual solicitude. And that Job was such, appears plain from that remarkable circumstance in his story, his constant sacrificing upon occasion of his children's feasting, least any impiety might have been committed by them in those unguarded hours, that might provoke the Deity to punish them.

Ch. i. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.*

WHETHER he had any extraordinary reason for those fears of his (as it is certain some very pious parents have had but untoward children) does not appear from the history. But that the loss of so many children at once must needs sit uppermost in his thoughts, and be accounted by him as the greatest of his calamities, is what no fond parent, I believe, will question.

THIS therefore even his friends (as we may perceive by their speeches) suppose to be a thing which touched him very nearly. And Bildad (Ch. viii. 4.) offers at

\* in loc.

something to check his complaints upon this head; though, like the rest of the advice those miserable comforters gave him, it rather had a tendency to increase his sorrows.

*Doth God (says he) pervert judgment? Or doth the Almighty pervert justice? If thy children (or perhaps thy children) have sinned against him, and he hath cast them away for their transgression.*

NAY Eliphaz touches upon the same point in that artful way which is so observable in his speeches, I mean, under a distant allusion.

Ch. iv. 8—11. *Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

*By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils they are consumed——*

*The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.*

AND towards the conclusion of his speech he promises Job, as an encouragement to his repentance, amongst other blessings, that of a numerous offspring, as one of the greatest. Ch. v. 25. *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*

IN his second speech (Chap. xv.) having said of the wicked man, ver. 29. *He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue,*—he adds, ver. 30. *The flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.* (rather, shall he remove them, *jasir*.)

By the breath of his mouth, *be-ruach pir*—— It is not unlikely that Eliphaz had here in his thoughts the *ruach gedola*, as it is called, (Ch. i. 19.) *the great wind*, that blew down the house upon Job's children. And this is the more probable, as he pursues the same strain of arguing in the like metaphorical expressions in the following verses.

Ver. 31. *Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity; for vanity shall be his recompence.*

32. *It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.*



33. *He shall shake off his unripe grapes as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.*

34. *For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate—&c.*

WE see then from the speeches of these two friends how greatly affected they thought Job to be with the loss of his children. For they both take notice of it as a very grievous part of his affliction; but with this remarkable difference, that Bildad very civilly supposes it might be the sins of his children themselves that occasioned their destruction: Eliphaz, that they might be cut off for the sins of their father. And this perhaps is the reason that this latter chose to speak in general terms, and to clothe his sentiments in metaphor and figure: whereas Bildad is very plain and particular—*Perhaps thy children have sinned against him, and he hath cast them away in their transgression.*

Now if we suppose Job to have had the same apprehension of the matter with Bildad, *viz.* That his sons, for whom he sacrificed every time they feasted, for fear they might have sinned, had now actually sinned, and been cast away for their transgression—I say, if this were the fear which he feared, and which was now come upon him; it is easy to perceive that this was no way inconsistent with that hope or confidence which he expresses upon another occasion, and upon another account; I mean, from a consciousness of his own integrity.

AND that this was indeed the fear which he feared, will appear still further evident by considering the words attentively, and their connexion with the foregoing verse, which is this—

Ch. iii. 24. *For my sighing cometh before I eat (the Hebrew is, *lipné lachm-i, coram pane meo, in presence of my meat, or at my meals,*) and my roarings are poured out like the water, (like the water, that is, which I then drink.)* After which immediately follows, *For the fear which I feared is come upon me, &c.*

Now why should Job's grief and sighs recur at his meals particularly, but because these would naturally put

put him in mind of his sons and daughters being met together at their banquets, when the house fell upon them, and destroyed them?

THE Chaldee Paraphrast thought this to be the fear which Job feared, as appears from his interpretation of the following verse, viz. Chap. iii. 26. *I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.* This he reads interrogatively, *Was I not?* and paraphrases thus—*Nonne dissimulari, quoniam nunciatum est mihi de bobus et asinis? Et nonne dormivi, quoniam nunciatum est mihi de incendio? Et nonne quievi, quando nunciatum est mihi de camelis? Et venit indignatio* (Chal. *rogeza commotio*, the same with the Hebrew word *trouble*) *quoniam nunciatum est mihi de morte filiorum.* He could easily suppress his grief, when he heard of the loss of his oxen and asses; nor did the other pieces of bad news disturb his rest or quiet much: till it was told him of the death of his children, and then trouble came upon him indeed. This is but following the history, which gives exactly such a description of the behaviour of Job\*.

\* It may not be amiss to add here, that the Paraphrast had such a sense of the greatness of this part of Job's affliction, that he thinks of it sometimes where Job did not. As particularly Chap. xlii. 6. *Now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* It happens that the Verb rendered *I abhor myself*, signifies likewise to *cast away*; as the other Verb does, to *repent* and to *be comforted*. Whence he takes occasion to interpret thus—*Now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I have cast away my riches, and am comforted for my sons which are as dust and ashes.* Nevertheless at ver. 13, to make amends to Job for this part of his sufferings, in the happy turn of his condition, he bestows upon him no less than fourteen sons; and perhaps would have doubled the number of the daughters too, had not their names expressly mentioned set bounds to his liberality.

The reader will see from what is here presented to him as a specimen, that these *Targums* (to which the Jews attribute the same authority, in a manner, as to the Hebrew scriptures) are not without their errors and reveries. However there are two things for which they are greatly valuable: as they help to ascertain the meaning of the Hebrew text; and as they give us interspersed the common opinions of the Jews of those times, wherein those paraphrases were made.



BUT from what has been said, I conceive, it sufficiently appears, that this seeming inconsistency in the passages above-cited (*viz. The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.—— And When I looked for good, then evil came upon me——*) admits of an easy solution, without considering Job as a representative person. No, says the learned writer, “These things are intirely discordant, if understood of one and the same person; and can never be reconciled but on supposition of an allegorical reference to another character; and then (*præsto*) all is right.”

THAT is, though the passages are inconsistent when either applied to Job, or to the Jewish people; yet apply one of them to Job, and the other to the Jewish people, and then all the difficulty vanishes in a moment.

WE see this extraordinary allegory is founded not in the agreement, but entire disagreement of the persons representing and represented.

BUT having thus endeavoured to clear up the inconsistencies which the learned writer finds in the character of Job, I suppose I may be allowed to pass by his allusions (as he thinks them) to the history and various circumstances of the Jews, as merely imaginary and without foundation. Some of them, at least, are very much strained and far-fetched.

For example, he says (p. 515.) “Job’s brethren now came to comfort him, and every man gave him a piece of mony, and every one an ear-ring of gold. This, without question, alludes to the presents which Ezra tells us the Jews of Babylon made to their brethren in Judea. *And all they that were about them, strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all that was willingly offered.*” (Ezra i. 6.)

Now one would think these presents had been made the Jews, like those to Job, after their frights and troubles were over, and as a reward of their piety and perseverance: but it happens unluckily, that they were made to them before their troubles begun, *viz.*

in

in the first year of Cyrus, that is, about fourscore years before their adversaries Sanballat and the rest gave them such disturbance in building their city and temple. This, I think, quite spoils the parallel.

AGAIN he says, \* “The 29th chapter is an exact and circumstantial description of the prosperous times of the Jewish people: several parts of which can be understood with no tolerable propriety of the condition of a private man.”

If by a private man be meant a particular person, as there is no reason assigned why they may not be so understood, I need not give a reason why they should.

AND as to the other part of the assertion, viz. that “this 29th chapter is an exact and circumstantial description of the prosperous times of the Jewish people:” † and that “the writer evidently alludes (as it follows) ‡ to the pillar of fire in the wilderness; — The *Shecinah* in the tabernacle; — The land flowing with milk and hony; — The administration of the Judges; — The curbing the ravages of the Philistines; — And the glory of their first monarchs—” (ver. 2, & seq.) All I shall say is, that perhaps these and many other allusions may appear to those who follow the bent of a strong fancy: and to such all arguments are useless. For I have long since learned from experience, that they who imagine things without reason, are not to be reasoned out of their imaginations.

\* V. 2. p. 508.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

## SECT. V.

LET us proceed to the “next person of the Drama,” as the author calls her, Job’s wife. “She acts a short part indeed, (says he) but a very spirited one. *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.*” Tender and pious! “He might see by this prelude of his spouse, what entertainment he was to expect from his friends.— *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou*



“still retain thine integrity? *Thummah, perfectio*, that is, religion. This was altogether in the Pagan manners; Idolaters, as we find in ancient history, generally growing impious on misfortunes—*Curse God; Barec, benedic*; spoken ironically, and therefore well translated *Curse*. So the Syr. and Arab. versions, *Conviciare Deo tuo*. This was another Pagan practice when they had prayed to no purpose—*Curse God and die*; that is, *dispatch yourself*. Another Pagan impiety—All this shews the woman to have been a rank idolater. But Job’s reply puts it out of question, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* A foolish woman is a Jewish expression to signify a foreign woman, an idolater, an adultress; for these characters were always joined together in their ideas.” \*

ALL this shower of arguments, driven so thick upon us like a storm, is intended to evince, that as Job in this poem represents the Jewish people, so must this wife of his the strange or idolatrous wives which many of the Jews had married contrary to the law. For she could not be the real wife of the real Job, as he goes on to prove. How “can we suppose that Job would marry an infidel, in a country that abounded with true believers? Job, who thought idolatry a crime to be punished by the judge? These are difficulties (says he) never to be got over, on the common idea of this book.” †

THE learned writer therefore, who must be allowed to have a very uncommon idea of the book, though he builds his allegory on the traditional story of a real Job, endeavours to distort the story as much as he can, and to make every thing therein appear unnatural and unlikely; as if the only way to make the allegory credible, were to shew the history to be incredible.

\* D.L. V. 2. p. 516, 517.

† Ibid. p. 518.

BUT now if there be no good proof, after all, that Job's wife, as here characterised, was an idolater, the whole foundation of the allegory fails again.

LET us consider the passage with attention. (Ch. ii. 9, 10.) *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die? But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh: What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

I SHALL begin with Job's reply, because, the author tells us, it puts the matter out of question: *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.* "A foolish woman" (says he) is a Jewish expression to signify "a foreign woman, an idolater, an adulteress; for these characters were always joined together in their ideas."\*

THAT is, because idolatry and adultery is folly; therefore every fool must be, in the sense of the Jews, an idolater, an adulterer, and every thing that is bad.

THE Word rendered foolish women is only the feminine plural of *Nabal*; of which word we have a plain and certain explication in the story of the person of that name, 1 Sam. xxv. 25. *Let not my Lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.*

BUT was Nabal a foreigner, or idolater, or adulterer? We do not read in the history that he was either. Or if he had, yet this is not the folly he is charged with, but his rash and inconsiderate behaviour, his passionate and hasty temper. This therefore is most likely to have been the failing of Job's wife too, by the appellation here bestowed upon her: and to this the circumstances of the story very well agree.

So that no proof can arise from hence of her being an idolater, or adulteress. And had she been either, I make no doubt but it would have been expressly mentioned in the history among the rest of Job's misfortunes.



NAY it could not well have been omitted, had this character been designed for the use that is here supposed, to give the Jews a dislike of marrying strange wives. Job would then, probably, have been made to say, *Thou speakest as one of the STRANGE WOMEN*; which would have been somewhat to the purpose.

WE see then how little there is in Job's reply to favour the learned writer's notion: Let us now consider the woman's speech.

AND here the chief argument to prove her a Pagan or Idolater, is her exhorting Job (according to him) to renounce his religion, and curse God. "*Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Thummab, perfectio*, that is, Religion——Curse God, *Barec, benedic*; spoken ironically; and therefore well translated *Curse*. So the Syr. and Arab. versions.——" \*

THIS is the short comment on the words. But now if this speech may, probably, have another meaning; this argument too must fall to the ground.

THE word *thummab*, which he translates religion, is the same which is used by Job, Ch. xxvii. 5. and there translated Integrity. *God forbid that I should justify you* (says he, in answer to the uncharitable suspicions of his friends) *till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me*. Which it is evident cannot be meant of his religion; for Job's friends never said any thing to tempt him to renounce his religion. But to make him renounce, or disclaim, his integrity and innocence, they said a great deal. And it was indeed the chief design of their harangues to bring him to confess himself guilty of some secret crimes, for which they supposed the hand of God was so severe upon him. Job's refusing to do this, is what he here calls *holding fast his integrity*. And so bishop Patrick, *Till I die, &c.* "I will sooner die, than confess the guilt you charge me withal."

AND why then may we not understand the very same expression in the same sense, in this speech of Job's wife? Which, taken in this light, will indeed be

\* V. 2. p. 517.

a "prelude (as the learned writer observes) to the entertainment Job was to expect from his friends;" but in another sense than he supposes. For the wife upbraids him in just the same strain that they did, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Bless (not Curse) God, and die.* That is, Dost thou still persist in the maintaining thou art innocent? Bless God by a confession of those secret sins for which he thus afflicts thee; and so yield thyself up to death. For I suppose she thought his case remediless.

Bless God, in this place, may be used in the same sense as Give glory to God, in the speech of Joshua to Achon (Josh. vii. 19.) *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him.*

THE author acknowledges, that *Barac*, &c. is, literally, Bless God; but he would have it spoke ironically. Which is very unlikely, considering the calamitous estate they both were in: for the wife must feel her share, if she had any feeling at all; and therefore the speech, we have reason to suppose, was serious. And if the foregoing explication be allowed, there appear to be these two errors in it. The first, her unjust suspicions of his being guilty of some secret sins; and next, her rash advising him to despair and die. For this I allow (but it is not enough to prove her a Pagan) that she seems to insinuate as if he had best starve himself, or some way or other put an end to his wretched life. To which Job replies, that she spoke like a weak and inconsiderate woman; that patience and an absolute resignation to the will of God was much better: for *Shall we receive good (says he) at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

THIS account of the woman's speech, we see, agrees very well with Job's reply to it. And if the words will bear a softer sense than that usually put upon them, such an equitable construction may (for any thing I know) be a piece of justice yet due to Job's wife, though dead three thousand years ago.

WHAT may further incline us to admit a favourable sense of the words, is that the verb *barac* properly signi-



signifies to accost or salute a person. Thus when Eli-sha sent his servant Gehazi on a message in great haste, he bids him (2 Kings iv. 29.) *If thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any man salute thee, (the same word barac repeated) answer him not again.* So (2 Kings x. 15.) Jehu meets Jonadab, *va-jebarece-bu*, and salutes or accosts him thus, *Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? &c.*

THIS signification of the verb is confirmed by that of the nouns that are derived from it. As bowing the knee was used in salutation, *berec* signifies a knee. And as presents very often accompanied their salutations, *berecakh* signifies a gift or present. So that they who take this way of investigating the proper meaning of a Hebrew word, viz. from the affinity of the root with its several branches, will easily acquiesce in this sense of the word. And it was, no doubt, the sense which the Septuagint translators had in view, when they turned the woman's speech thus, *εἰπον τι πῆμα εἰς κύριον*—Say something to God, or address thyself to him.

NAY I know not but this sense may suit very well with the speech of Satan, Job i. 11. where the same word occurs. *But now put forth thine hand, and touch all that he hath, im lo val-paneca jebarececa, and see whether he will not return thee a suitable salutation to thy face.*

As there are common forms of salutation used, perhaps, amongst all people both at their meeting and parting, we find the verb *barac* used with a reference to the latter particularly, 2 Sam. xix. 39. where David, in parting from good old Barzillai, *kissed him, va-jebarece-bu*, and blessed, that is, bid him farewell.

AND this seems to favour the interpretation which the learned Schultens has given to these words of Job's wife, viz. *valere jubeas numen, et morere, bid farewell to God and die.* That is, as he explains it, *Take up with another system of religious notions, and no longer think prosperously the reward of piety.*

THERE is but one other place in the Bible, beside these first chapters of Job, where the word has any appearance

pearance of being used in the sense of cursing or blaspheming, and that is in the charge against Naboth, (1 Kings xxi. 13.) *berec Naboth Elohim va-melec, Naboth hath blasphemed God and the King.* But even here, perhaps, it might have been as well rendered, *Naboth hath bid farewell to God and the King*; that is, *hath renounced his allegiance to both.* If Naboth was a worshipper of the true God, and had shewn a contempt of Ahab's or of Jezebel's idols; this, together with his refusing the King his vineyard, might easily be wrought up into a charge of high impiety against him, by those sons of Belial his accusers, and be as easily credited by an idolatrous mob, and so the poor man be hurried to his execution.

THE circumstance of the story shews that the word here must be used in a bad sense. But I apprehend there is no necessity that it should be so understood in the speech of Job's wife. However supposing the worst, that the verb *barac* is to be understood in the sense of cursing or blaspheming, both in Satan's speech and the woman's; and that she were here tempting her husband to that very crime, to which that evil spirit thought to have seduced him; all that will follow from it (I conceive) is this, that we should think her a wicked woman. But neither will this speech, perverse and impious as it is in this view, nor any thing else that is said of her in the history, prove her to have been an idolatress, and as such a fit representative of the idolatrous wives, which some of the Jews had taken contrary to the law.

THE author observes from Ezra (Chap. ix. 1.) that those of the Jews "who had taken strange women" "were drawn into the abominations of the people of the lands.\*" To compleat the parallel therefore, Job's wife should not only have tempted him, (which yet she did not) but have actually drawn him to idolatry.

BUT above all, and to support the allegory in its most concerning circumstance, as the Jews were obliged to put



away their idolatrous wives, so Job should have put away his in the upshot of the fable. This would certainly have been done, had such an allegory been intended as Mr. W. supposes. He seems to wish that "the sacred writer had told us, to give us the highest idea of Job's succeeding felicity, that he lived to bury his wife.\*" But had he put her away by a divorce, it might have done as well; and I suppose Mr. W. would have been as well pleased with it. But it is remarkable, that she is not so much as mentioned at the conclusion of the poem. Though the three friends are severely reprov'd by God, the wife is not: perhaps because the husband's reproof was sufficient for a rash word weakly and heedlessly spoken.

WE have done with Job's wife. But as he has brought the daughters too upon the stage, I must follow him here, not to take notice of every question that may be started (as, why the names of the daughters are mentioned, and not of the sons, &c.) but only of the single point which is to our purpose, viz. that as Job's wife was to represent the idolatrous wives, so the daughters in the allegory are to stand for the daughters of Israel: And to this end are described as beauties, *And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job.†* Nay and fortunes too, for *their father gave them inheritance among their brethren‡*. In short, "the writers design was to recommend them as the most desirable parties: ||" that so the men for the future might be induced to match at home, and not wander abroad for strange wives. — This is the learned writer's notion.

Now here I would only desire to be allowed one reasonable *postulatum*, viz. That the sons of Job may be supposed to represent the sons of Israel, as well as the daughters their sex. And then let him tell us, why there is so wide a disproportion between them. For the sons of Israel seven, and the daughters three; this, we see, rightly reckoned, does not amount to

\* Ibid. p. 516.

† Job xlii. 15.

‡ Ibid.

|| V. 2. p. 522.

half a wife a piece. And then I doubt their beauty and their fortunes would scarce be thought consideration enough to make amends for that deficiency. The men would still have but too good an excuse to look out for strange wives.

## SECT. VI.

“WE come next (says Mr. W. p. 522.) to  
“ Job’s three friends—— Their solemn ap-  
“ pointment to go and comfort Job; the neglect of  
“ their errand when they came thither; their inhumana-  
“ nity and humour of contradiction, have been already taken notice of, and explained and reconciled  
“ on the nature and principles of a dramatic composition.”

THIS has been considered, SECT. I.

“ BUT (he proceeds) this was not all; we find, on  
“ on the issue of their debate, so many marks of insult, falsehood, and malice, that we must needs  
“ conclude their friendship to be all feigned; that  
“ they were enemies in their hearts; and that the true  
“ purpose of their visit was to embitter and aggravate  
“ his miseries. This requires other principles to explain it: for, in the historical part, they are represented as real friends; and this makes such a difficulty as nothing but our idea of the work can remove. Who then will doubt but that as the people were represented under Job, these three friends  
“ were their three capital enemies, who so much hindered and obstructed the rebuilding Jerusalem and  
“ the Temple, Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem; of  
“ whom Nehemiah gives us this account.”——

AND so he proceeds to quote Nehem. ii. 10. as also Chap. iv. 7, 8, &c. and to draw a parallel betwixt the practices of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, and those of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar; in which there is just as much resemblance, as between obstructing the building of a city or temple, and reasoning about the nature of afflictions.



I MAY therefore be excused from following him? especially as the whole rests upon this single point, Whether these friends of Job were really friends or enemies.

HE grants, that they are described as true friends in the history; and at the same time allows, that they could not be fit representatives of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, unless they were false and treacherous friends, and, under a mask of friendship, real and most bitter enemies.

How hard is the learned writer put to it, that he cannot vindicate his interpretation of the book of Job, but by making the book, every now and then, contradict itself! "In the historical part (it seems) they "are represented as real friends; but in the debate "they shew so many marks of insult, falsehood and "malice, that we must conclude their friendship was "all feigned; that they were enemies in their hearts; "and that the true purpose of their visit was to im- "bitter and aggravate his miseries."

If so; it must be allowed that they were excellent dissemblers. Nay, that they dissembled with one another as well as Job; for the appointment they made with one another was *to come to mourn with and comfort Job*, (Chap. iii. 11.) And to shew that they were greatly in earnest, as soon as they saw their friend at some distance, so terribly disguised with his misfortunes that they scarce knew him to be the same, *they lift up their voice and wept, and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven; and sate down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word to him: for they saw that his grief was very great.* (ver. 12, 13.)

HITHERTO we see nothing but the marks of a real friendship on their side, and these the strongest and most natural that could be given. On the other hand, the emotion which it caused in Job, affords us a good token that the friendship was sincere on his side.

I BELIEVE no one ever lay under a very great and recent affliction, but, upon sight of a near friend or intimate acquaintance, found his griefs renewed. The remem-

remembrance of his former happiness, revived by such an interview, and meeting with the sense of his present deplorable condition, hath raised the tide of sorrow to its utmost height.

THIS was the case of Job: who, though he had hitherto born the afflictive strokes of providence with a most exemplary patience and magnanimity; yet at the sight of these his old acquaintance, and their manner of behaviour to him as above described, finds his passion of sorrow raised to such a pitch, that he was no longer able to contain it, but was forced to give it vent in those bitter complaints which we read, Ch. iii. and which begins the dialogue betwixt these friends. *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said there is a man-child conceived, &c.* The whole chapter runs in the same strain, and is the language of one, who, quite overwhelmed with his misfortunes, and in despair of being relieved from them, was become weary of life, and earnestly wished for death.

THE speech of Eliphaz, which follows in the two next chapters, is a remarkable one, and will let us into somewhat of the temper of Job's friends, as well as the true purpose of their visit, by which we shall be able to determine whether they came as friends or enemies. And therefore let us consider it attentively.

HE begins with an apology for his speech; as foreseeing that what he was about to say might not be very acceptable. Chap. iv. 2. *If we essay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? But who can withhold himself from speaking?*

HE proceeds to put Job in mind, that he had instructed many how to bear afflictions, and that his good advice had been effectual to the healing of their griefs: that therefore it would ill become him, now it was his own turn to suffer, to forget the lessons he had taught, and deliver himself up to despair, as he had seemed to do by the whole tenour of his speech.

VER. 3, 4, 5. *Behold thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.*

*Thy words have upheld him that was falling; and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.* But



*But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest: it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*

HE then points out to him the proper refuge of the afflicted: that their trust or confidence should be in God; and their hope in the conciliating his favour by an upright course of life.

VER. 6. *Is not thy fear thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways? That is, Thy Fear of God\* should be thy confidence; and thine hope and thy integrity should go together.*

FOR as he presently adds, (and here he begins to shew what he suspected)

VER. 7, 8, 9. *Remember, I pray thee, Who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off?*

*Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*

*By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.*

THE strong terms which he here uses, *Who ever perished being innocent?* And his adding what he had observed himself of the punishment that sometimes remarkably befalls wicked men, contain a shrewd in-

\* *Thy fear of God*, or perhaps *God himself*, who is sometimes called the *fear of good men* (as he is the object of their fear) in Scripture. *Let him be thy fear, let him be thy dread*, Isa. viii. 11. So Jacob swears by the *fear of his father Isaac*, Gen. xxxi. 53. Nor is this language peculiar to the holy Scriptures: The old poet Eschylus calls Jupiter ὑψίστος ἢ βεσσιὸς φόβος. (*Æsch. Ixionides*.) *the highest fear among mortals.*

There is another sense that may be given to the passage, as the word כסל, here translated *confidence*, often signifies *folly*. And so it will run thus—*Is not thy fear thy folly? Thy hope, and the integrity of thy ways.* That is, *Does not thy fear proceed from some folly or wickedness thou hast been guilty of? Or if thou art innocent, ought not thy hope to keep pace with thine integrity? For remember, who ever perished being innocent? &c.*

The *Vau*, or conjunction *and*, seems here indeed to be misplaced, and should naturally be before *thine hope*, and then the construction will be plainer. *Is not thy fear thy folly? and thy hope, the integrity of thy ways?* But there are several examples where the *Vau* is thus postponed, and that with elegance. As Gen. xix. 4. *Terem jishcabu ve-anshê ba-Yir, &c.* *Before they lay down and the men of the city compassed the house, &c.* instead of, *And before they lay down—* If this were allowable in prose, it was much more so in verse,

finuation

sinuation that he believed Job to have been guilty of some secret sins for which the hand of God was thus heavy on him.

WHAT follows, more and more confirms this notion. For, by the recital of a vision which he had, he intimates to him what a folly it would be to presume to justify himself before God, in whose sight the angels themselves were not pure or perfect, and some of them had actually fallen from their obedience and their seats of blessedness.

VER. 16—19.—*I heard a voice saying,*

*Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?*

*Behold he put no trust in his servants? and his angels he charged with folly.*

*How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay—— that is, earthly bodies?*

HE then repeats what he had learned from his own observation to be the lot of a wicked man. Though he had seen him taking root, and fixed, to all appearance, in a safe and flourishing condition; yet he soon saw reason to pronounce him wretched and accursed. A sudden calamity has overwhelmed his habitation—*His children are crushed in the gate—— and a robber swalloweth up his substance.* (Ch. v. 3, 4, 5.)

THIS description came a little too near to the case of Job, to pass unobserved.

To which he adds, that we are not to look on troubles and afflictions as arising merely from natural causes, but as the inflictions of a righteous judge: and hence it becomes as necessary for sinful men to suffer, as for the sparks of fire to ascend\*.

CH. V.

\* I have followed the common interpretation of this passage, though I think the words will bear another and a better construction, thus—*For iniquity cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.* For (then) man would be born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward. That is, it would fall upon him naturally and necessarily, without the determination or direction of any moral agent—— He could neither prevent it by his piety, nor hasten it by his impiety.

The verbs in this passage are all future; and it is well known that the futures, in the Hebrew, are used with some latitude. So that



CH. v. 6, 7. *Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground:*

*Yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*

THE Hebrew is rather — *For iniquity cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.* That is, as the wickedness of men does not proceed from any natural cause, but from their own free wills; so neither are their miseries to be considered as the effects of natural causes, but as the distributions of a free agent likewise, who fits men's punishment to their crimes. And hence man, being prone to sin, is necessarily born to suffer.

HE proceeds to tell him therefore, what he would do, were it his own case, and were he in the same distressed condition with his friend.

VER. 8, 9. *I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:*

*Which doth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number.*

THAT is, (for he had precluded him from all attempts to justify himself in the foregoing part of his advice) *I would apply to God by a full and free confession of those sins, which have drawn this sad calamity upon me.*

that *Ci adam julad le-yamal*, signifies equally, *for man will be born, or, man would be born to trouble.* The construction is easy and common, and we have an example of it in the very next verse. *I would seek unto God*, is, *ani edrosh*, the Future Kal.

Schultens has another explication of this passage, which gives a grand sense; but then, I think, he puts a force upon the words. He renders the 7th verse thus; *Nam homo quidem ad improbitatem obstinate perversus est, at filii coruscationis in celso volant.* For man is obstinately bent on wickedness; but the lightnings fly on high — ready to fall, that is, upon his head.

Here he gives a sense to the word *julad* unknown to the Hebrew, but which he fetches from the Arabic, and makes it signify *obstinacy* or *perverse sense*. But however recourse may be had to the Arabic for the sense of an unusual word, I should scarce think it allowable for so common a word as this. And then for the other clause which he translates “The sons of coruscation” (meaning the lightnings) “fly on high;” the Hebrew is rendered, literally, “The sons of the burning coal lift up themselves to fly.” This agrees well with the sparks of fire, which naturally ascend; but not with the lightnings, which dart themselves downward, and must descend to do Execution.

God,

God, who was able to do wonders, (as he presently adds) and who could, and would restore him to his former happy state, if he saw him truly penitent for his past transgressions. For this is the whole purport of the following part of the speech, *viz.* to give him hopes of a happy turn to his condition, if he would but do what he thought was absolutely necessary to be done in his case, make a frank confession of those secret crimes and enormities which had pulled down this severe chastisement on his head.

VER. 17, 18, 19——25, 26, 27. *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*

*For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.*

*He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea in seven shall no evil touch thee.——*

*Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*

*Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season.*

*Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*

THE intent of this speech then, however soft and insinuating, is very plain: it was to bring Job to a confession of some secret wickedness, some great enormity, of which they supposed him to be guilty.

AND so, we find, Job understood it; for he complains of the unkindness of the suspicion in the following reply.

CH. vi. 14, 15. *To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend: but——My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the streams of brooks they pass away——* without affording me, that is, the least refreshment or consolation.

So Verse 25. *How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove?*

HOWEVER Bildad renews the charge, (Chap. viii.) and upon Job's still persisting to maintain his innocence, (Chapters the ix<sup>th</sup> and x<sup>th</sup>) Zophar, more fu-



rious than the ethers, directly taxes him with hypocrisy and falsehood; and says, his punishment was still short of his desert.

CH. xi. 3. *Shall thy lies make men bold their peace? And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?*

VER. 6. — *Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.*

THE following speeches of these mistaken friends run in the same strain. And Eliphaz, in his last speech, is so vexed to find Job still obstinately bent upon the denying himself guilty of any great crimes, that he reckons up some of the worst that he could think of, and without ceremony charges them home upon him.

CH. xxii. 5, 6, &c. *Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*

*For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.*

*Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withheld bread from the hungry. —*

*Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.*

AGAIN, Ver. 13. — *Thou sayest, How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark cloud?*

*Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not, — &c.*

HERE we see this good man charged with some of the worst instances of inhumanity and impiety. Not with any malicious design to “aggravate his miseries, \*” (as the learned writer supposes) but rather with a charitable intention to bring him to a confession of that guilt, of which they had rashly suspected him. And, upon his confession, no doubt but they would have made him the kind offer of their prayers and intercessions, the same favour for which they were after-

\* D. L. V. 2. p. 522. The Chaldee Paraphrast was so far from being of Mr. W——n’s mind, as to the malicious purpose of this visit, that on the contrary he esteems it an act of charity in them so sublime, as to have merit enough to save their souls. His words are, in the Latin translation, *Et venerunt unusquisque de loco suo, & ob hoc meritum liberati sunt a loco destinato ipsis in gehenna.*

ward beholden to Job; who, to their great surprize, was pronounced by the impartial Judge himself a much better man than they.

THE question then, debated betwixt these friends, as appears from the whole process of the dispute, was not whether God's providence was equal or unequal, but whether Job was wicked.

THESE honest men were not bred in the schools of logic, nor taught to lay down a thesis, and then proceed regularly to dispute it: (beside that such a question as this, it is confessed, was never yet disputed in any of the schools of philosophy.) But they came with an unhappy suspicion, that their friend had been guilty of some great sin; and therefore were resolved to try him to the utmost, that so they might find room at length for that sort of advice and consolation which they thought he needed, and which they sincerely intended him.

THAT this conduct was wrong, is very certain. But to say it is unnatural or improbable, is to be little acquainted with the world, and the usual tempers and dispositions of mankind. They who are conscious of great failings in themselves, are but too easily inclined to believe the worst of others. And on the other hand, persons of an austere piety are apt to entertain hard censures and suspicions of the best of men, when any signal calamity befalls them that carries the mark of a divine infliction. In such a case, not to think ill of those whom God hath seemed to treat so ill, argues, in their opinion, a want of zeal for God and religion.

Now here it must be allowed, that, to persons of that temper, the appearances were very strong. The calamities, that beset this great man all at once, had something in them so extraordinary, that we need not wonder his friends immediately concluded there must be some extraordinary reason for it. And perhaps one great design of this noble history or poem was to teach us, that God may have other reasons for afflicting, be-



side the punishing men \* for their sins : and that we are not to pass this judgment upon others, where the hand of God is never so apparent, unless the crimes be likewise certain and apparent.

THIS is a very just and useful moral, and necessary for all times and places.

BUT the friends of Job fall in with the way of vulgar spirits, to charge home this extraordinary calamity of their friend as a visible judgment on him for his sins. And because he had none that were publick and notorious, they will needs persuade him that he had some secret bosom-sin, and that of the deepest dye, that could subject him to such extreme misery.

AND to convince him of it, they argue from experience, and what they had observed to be the method of divine providence. They had seen many instances of wicked men remarkably punished, (some, no doubt, that were such, and others that had passed for such in the opinion of rash judges and censurers, like themselves;) and hence had formed to themselves a sort of general maxim, that where they saw great wretchedness and sufferings, there was to be supposed a high probability, at least, of as great crimes.

To this way of arguing Job opposes observation and experience likewise; and shews that the rule of judging they had formed to themselves was by no means right, or without exception. That good men were sometimes miserable, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that, for the most part, things were dealt out here promiscuously. That this was more especially observable in times of war, and pestilence, and such

\* This Maimonides represents to be the doctrine of their law, viz. that all good things are bestowed as a reward; and all evils whatsoever (even an accidental prick of a thorn) are inflicted on men by way of punishment for their sins— *Ita ut, si vel spinâ homo manum suam lædat, quam statim iterum extrahat, pœnæ loco id ipsi inflictum esse censendum sit: Et è contra, si vel minimum bonum ipsi contingat, præmii & retributionis loco sit habendum.* And to this he wrests that text, Deut. xxxii. 4. *For all his ways are judgment.* More Nev. Par. 3. cap. 17.

other sweeping calamities, where the good and bad fall undistinguished.

CH. ix. 22, 23. *This is one thing, therefore I said it; He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.*

*If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh (or, † it will laugh) at the trial of the innocent.*

To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his misery, to hear his friends charge him with supposed crimes which his soul abhorred. That he, who thus severely had afflicted him, at the same time knew his innocence; and to him he would appeal, and still adhere to, and even trust or hope in him both in life and death. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him\**, (Ch. xiii. 15.)

THERE are several other passages, which express this good man's hope in God for a future happy state; not in this world, (which is the strange notion of some interpreters) for nothing could be more unlikely. He himself all along considers his condition as quite hopeless in this respect, as appears plainly from his so often wishing for death: and this sometimes with an earnest-

† It will laugh, *viz.* the scourge. So Schultens—The figure is bold, but not too bold for poetry.

\* I follow the English version here, which is according to the marginal reading (or *Keri*) of the Hebrew, לֹא יִמָּוֵת, not מָוֵת. However, the other reading, taking in what follows, will amount to the same thing. For it will be thus; "Lo, he will kill; I will not hope, nevertheless I will argue my own ways" (or, plead my own cause) "before him. He also shall be my salvation, for an hypocrite shall not come before him."

It is plain, that Job here despairs of life, and yet hopes for salvation: which therefore must necessarily be understood of a future absolution and reward in the day of judgment.

There is a passage somewhat parallel with this in Job's speech, Ch. vi. 10, where, after wishing that God would let loose his hand, and cut him off, he adds, *Then should I yet have comfort*—*for I have not concealed the words of the Holy-One: that is, "This should be my comfort even in death, that I have acted uprightly and sincerely, neither prevaricating with the laws of God myself, nor concealing them from others, my children, or domesticks, or where-ever my authority and influence could reach."*—A poor consolation, perfectly romantick and delusive, could we suppose him to have no expectations after death.



ness, which nothing can account for or excuse, but his strong hopes of immortality.

BUT for the farther clearing up the character of Job, and his friends, and the subject of dispute between them, it may be proper to take with us the following consideration, *viz.*

THAT it is natural for men, in the heat of a dispute, to carry things to an extreme on either hand; or at least, to be very unguarded sometimes in their expressions. And therefore we are not to interpret every word that fell from these unwary combatants in the strictest and severest sense.

FOR example, when Eliphaz says, *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off?* (Chap. iv. 7.) Or when we meet with any the like expression in their following speeches, we are not to conclude from hence that these friends of Job were possessed with the notion of an equal providence; or that they really believed, that there never was an instance of an innocent man's perishing miserably, or the righteous being cut off untimely: but only that it much seldomer happened thus than otherwise. The strength of the expression is to be allowed for, by attending to the design they had upon Job, and their zeal in prosecuting it.

ON the other hand, it would be injurious to the character of Job, should we interpret in a severe and rigorous sense, (as it is certain his friends too often did) his frequent protestations of his innocence, and his bold appeals to the supreme Judge to prove and try him. For where he is thus strenuous in asserting his integrity, it is only in opposition to the notion which those mistaken friends had entertained of him, *viz.* that he had been guilty of some gross sins, which he had the art to hide from the world; that he was, in reality, a wicked man, and a hypocrite in his behaviour.

THIS is what Job utterly denies and disclaims. But as for a perfect innocence or freedom from sin, it is what he no where arrogates to himself: nor does he  
plead

plead his uprightness, as if it were sufficient to justify him before God, without having recourse to the divine mercy.

*I have sinned*, says he, (Ch. vii. 20.) *what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* And again, (ver. 21.) *Why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?*

WHICH shews him to have been sufficiently sensible of the common frailties of human nature, and might have superseded much of that mistaken rhetoric with which his friends persecute him—— *Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker \*? &c.* But their design was, to make him confess himself not only a frail mortal, but a wicked one.

THERE is one thing more to be observed upon this conduct of Job's friends, and their rash ill-natured censures of him; as it may help to set the poem in its true light.

I HAVE already shewn, that such a conduct, however wrong, is far from being unnatural or unusual: nor does it at all evince what the learned writer would infer from it, that "their friendship was all feigned, and that they were enemies in their hearts."

BUT it deserves our notice, how admirably this weakness of the friends was made subservient to the great design of providence with respect to Job; and the end proposed by the divine wisdom to exhibit him as a pattern of patience to all succeeding generations. For neither could his sufferings have been so compleat, nor consequently his patience so exemplary, had not God permitted this, I had almost called it the severest trial of all, to befall him. There is scarcely any thing which a generous mind is so little able to bear as ignominy and reproach; especially the reproaches of those who have been formerly his friends. This therefore is a very delicate circumstance, that could not be omitted, if the afflictions of this good man were intended

\* Ch. iv. 17.



to be shewn in their proper heighth, so as to make his virtue, and the reward of it, the more conspicuous.

## S E C T. VII.

**I**T would be tedious to go through all the visionary scenes of this allegorical drama, were not the question before us of some importance, *viz.* concerning the antiquity of one of the noblest books in the world: a circumstance which stamps the highest value on it, considered as a monument of antiquity, or as it gives evidence to the history and doctrines of the most ancient times.

For in this view, I take it, books beyond such an age rise in their real value, as diamonds beyond such a weight and lustre do in their imaginary one: and that the oldest writings, like the largest and best diamond, are of a worth superior to all estimation.

Now the book of Job bids as fair to be a jewel of this kind, as any that I know. Let us therefore borrow a little patience from it, to consider the remaining characters of the poem in that light wherein the learned writer places them.

“THE last person in the opposition (says he) is the Devil himself, SATAN, the author and contriver of all the mischief. And now we are come to that part of the allegory, where the fable and the moral meet, and, as it were, concur to throw off the mask, and expose the true face of the subject; this assault of Satan upon Job being the very assault that the prophet Zechariah tells us he made, at this time, on the people. The only difference is, that, in the prophecy, Joshua the high-priest stands for the people; and in this poem, Job: in all the rest, the identity is so strongly supported, that this single circumstance is, alone, sufficient to confirm the truth of our whole interpretation. There needs only setting the two passages together to convince the most incredulous.”\*

\* *Div. Leg.* V. 2, p. 528, 529.

THIS then is worth the considering, because it brings the matter to a short issue: for if this grand argument will not carry his cause, to be sure nothing will. Let us therefore view the passages with attention, and prepare to lay aside our incredulity.

The passage of Job runs thus, Chap. i. 6, &c. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?—— But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*

THE prophet's account is in these words, *Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation. And he sheweth me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head; so they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments, and the angel of the Lord stood by.\**

THESE are the two passages, which the author has set together to be compared, as containing a decisive argument to his purpose. And yet (I think) it is dif-

\* Zech. Ch. iii. 13. Ch. iii. 1, et seq.



ficult to perceive any thing of that identity he speaks of, beside this single circumstance, that Satan is introduced in both passages, as *standing in the presence of the Lord*.

BUT in the following words, where he gives us the application or result of the comparison, he takes in all the great lines of the history of Job; and so comments upon it thus.

“ Job’s whole dramatic life lies here in its *Stamina*,  
 “ ——— *Satan standing at the angel’s right hand to resist*  
 “ *Josbua*, is, when drawn out more at length, his per-  
 “ *secution of Job*. ——— *Josbua clothed with filthy garments*,  
 “ *is Job amongst the ashes*. ——— *The clothing Josbua with*  
 “ *change of raiment, and setting a fair mitre on his head*,  
 “ *is Job’s returning prosperity*; ——— *And the angel of*  
 “ *the Lord standing by*, is God’s interposition from the  
 “ *Whirlwind*. \* ”

HERE then we have the whole force of the argument. And, to give the learned writer his due, whatever becomes of the reasoning part, one cannot but admire the strength and fertility of his imagination. This airy edifice is so well framed and put together, that it were pity to demolish it, were not the question before us (as I said) of some importance; and therefore we must not suffer it to be determined by a little skill or luck in castle-building.

AND here there starts up one difficulty in the very entrance, which seems to thwart a part, at least, of this elaborate hypothesis. For if Job’s whole dramatic life be, in its *Stamina*, in this vision; one would think the prophet who received the vision, and not Ezra, was the most likely person to have composed the book of Job. Or did Ezra borrow the model from him, and build according to it?

To pass by this — I would observe first, that it is not a resemblance in two or three particulars that can determine such a point as this, *viz.* that this vision of Zechariah was intended as a counterpart of, or has any reference to the story of Job. On the other hand,

if there be but one apparent dissimilitude, this (I take it) is enough to overthrow the whole of such a supposition.

AND there seems to me to be a very material one in the character of Job and that of Joshua, as they are described to us in these two passages; so that if the one be a fit representative of the Jewish people, the other cannot. For by Joshua's filthy garments is evidently implied some moral turpitude, some sin or trespass he had been guilty of: as appears from hence, that the taking away his filthy garments was the causing his iniquity to pass from him, as we find it explained, ver. 4. *Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.* Whereas the character bestowed on Job is this, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil,* (Job i. 8.) Accordingly the favour here conferred on Joshua is the pardon of his sin: but that bestowed on Job is the reward of his virtue and his patience, a prosperity double to what he had enjoyed before.

I MIGHT observe further, that there is not only this dissimilitude of character in the principal person of the vision and the poem; but several deficiencies in the former, of parts that seem essential to the latter; several of the main *Stamina* wanting to compleat the parallel. For where are Job's three friends? And what is become of the grand question of *an equal or unequal providence*, which (according to the author) makes the subject of debate throughout the dialogue? Are not these essential to the drama? And where do we find the least hint, or any vestiges of them in the vision?

BUT further, I might ask, How does it appear that Joshua here stands as representative of the Jewish people? There is no such intimation given us by the prophet; nor any reason to suppose it, but rather the contrary.

THE Jewish people indeed were much concerned in the legal cleanness or uncleanness of their high-priest:  
for



for the chief offices of their religion must be at a stand, and could not be discharged without him. And therefore no wonder that we find it here intimated, that it was for the sake of *Jerusalem which God had chosen* \*, that their high-priest was thus restored to them clean, and holy, and in full favour with God.

BUT are we to consider him as a representative of the people, when the change of raiment was put about him, and a fair mitre, in particular, on his head? Or, did not these vestments properly belong to him as high-priest? And if so, must not the iniquity said to be made to pass from him, of which this change of raiment was a token, be something personal likewise?

THERE is a little wild Talmudical story, which as it hath a reference to the passage now before us, I shall here insert. It is formed upon this text, together with that of Jeremiah, Ch. xxix. 21, 22. *Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name, Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes. And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The Lord make thee like Zedekiah, and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire, &c.*

THE story is, that this Ahab and Zedekiah having, in concert, attempted to corrupt the chastity of king Nebuchadrezzar's daughter, by addressing her, each with a message as from God, the one in favour of the other: the king, to whom the daughter had discovered the matter, calls them before him, and asks them who bid them go with such a wicked message: for he had consulted Hananiah, Misael, and Azariah, (the three worthies, who had been delivered from the fiery furnace) and these good men disapproved and abhorred the thing. The others plead their claim to be heard as prophets, no less than those he mentioned: and the king tells them, they should be tried then the same way, meaning, that they should pass through the

\* Zech. iii. 2.

furnace as the others did.— But they, willing to evade the trial, reply, that there was an inequality in the case : for that they were only two, the others three. Upon which Nebuchadrezzar bids them take a third into their society, whom they pleased. And they chuse Joshua the son of Jozadach, our high-priest : esteeming themselves (says the story) safe and secure in his merits. But the event was, that these two wicked wretches were consumed; and Joshua escaped, only with his garments and himself a little scorched. The king however asks him, as he believed him to be a righteous man, how it came to pass that the fire had any power at all over him, when it had none upon Hananiah and his companions? Joshua answered, it was because he was but one. Neither was Abraham, says the king : (for they have a tradition, that Abraham too was cast into the fire, and came out safe.) But Abraham, replies Joshua, had no wicked men with him, as I had, to give a force to the flame : *for two dry sticks, according to the proverb, will set fire to a green one.* The proverb, and the moral (to be sure) is good. But still the question is repeated, Why should Joshua be punished? And we have it thus resolved (to come home to our purpose) *Quod filii ipsius, &c. Because his sons had married strange wives, and the father did not interpose his authority to prevent it.* As it is said Zech. iii. 3. *Now Joshua was clothed with filthy \* garments, &c.* such garments being neither usual with him, nor becoming of him; but hereby is intimated his fault in conniving at his sons marriages†.

WHETHER this little Jewish story may not prove defective as to the chronological part (a very common

\* God says just before, *Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire?* The taking this expression in too literal a sense, seems to have given a handle to the weaving of the story here told us : as the ambiguity of the word *Ur*, the proper name of a place, but when used as an appellative, signifying *Fire*, seems to have given rise to the story of Abraham's coming forth from the fire of the Chaldees.

† See Joh. Coch, or Cocceius, his *Duo Tituli Talmudici, Sanbedrin et Maccoth.* p. 322.



fault with this people) I will not be answerable: for though amongst the sons of the priests who were found to have taken strange wives, those of Joshua the son of Jozadab are expressly mentioned, Ezra x. 18. yet this seems to have happened long after the date of this prophecy of Zechariah †. However, that some personal sin of Joshua is here pointed at, and not any sin of the people whom the author supposes him to represent, appears still more plainly from what follows in the chapter.—— For after clothing him with change of raiment, in token that his iniquity was forgiven; (amongst these, a fair mitre, as I observed, to shew that it was the priesthood that had been sullied, and which was now to be restored to its due lustre——) the angel proceeds to give him a charge (ver. 7.) in these words: *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among those that stand by.* The office and jurisdiction of the high-priest is here plainly described; and no privilege that can, in any tolerable sense, be applied to the Jewish people.

BUT lastly, were the similitude much greater than it is, betwixt this vision and the story of Job; yet how is this an argument that the one has any reference to the other? Is the bare likeness a sufficient proof of it? Or does the vision bear so peculiar a resemblance to the story of Job, that it will suit no other piece of history? Let us try for once whether it be so or not; and oppose a trifle to a trifle.

I HAVE already observed, that Job and his friends were by no means proper persons to debate his question of an equal or unequal providence, which, by the author's own confession, could have no place out

† Maimonides, amongst others, seems to have thought that this indulgence to the rebellion of his sons, (as he calls it) was Joshua's crime here referred to.—— *Eadem est ratio, idemque sensus illius, quod legimus in historia rebellionis filiorum Josue sacerdotis magni; Et Satan stabat ad dexteram ejus, ut adversaretur ei, &c.* More Nev. Par. 3. Cap. 22.

of the land of Judea, nor admit of a dispute with any, but with Israelites or Jews. And therefore had Ezra designed such an allegorical poem as is here supposed, there is no doubt but he would have searched the history of his own nation, to find a proper story and proper persons for his dialogue. Nor could he have been much at a loss to find them.

FOR suppose we take the story of David, and the persecution which he underwent from Saul, together with the happy turn of his condition, his advancement to the throne, and future prosperity: these particulars, with a little good management, might have effectually supplied the place of Job, and served the allegory full as well.

FOR let us try it by the standard here given, I mean the vision of Zechariah.

I might say then, in the learned writer's phrase, "that David's whole dramatic life lies here in its *Stamina*. *Satan standing at the angel's right hand to resist Joshua*, is, when drawn out more at length, *his persecution of David*. (For it was the evil Spirit instigating Saul, that occasioned David's persecution.) *Joshua clothed with filthy garments*, is David *in a state of banishment*. *The clothing Joshua with change of raiment, and setting a fair mitre on his head*, is David's *returning prosperity*." (For what could it signify more naturally than the royal robes and diadem?) And lastly, "*The angel of the Lord standing by*, is God's *interposition in the whole affair*."

HERE then is a story exactly suited to Ezra's purpose, and which he could not well have missed, had he designed such an allegorical poem as we are speaking of. And the vision of Zechariah, we see, agrees as well to it, and would have been as good an argument therefore in support of this allegory, as that of Job. And then the question of *an equal or unequal providence* might be introduced with some propriety, where Jews or Israelites were to be the speakers. I hope I shall be excused the liberty I have taken, in thus confronting one whim with another: for perhaps the best way of exposing some things is to shew them in a glass.



glass. And I believe it sufficiently appears, how fallacious a way of arguing this is from the fancied likenesses in things, where the imagination has so great a sway : that there is nothing in this vision of Zechariah peculiarly applicable to the story of Job, more than that of David, or others that might be thought of, if we let the fancy range. And therefore this palmary argument of the learned writer (to borrow an expression from him) is so far from being “ sufficient to confirm the truth of his interpretation of the book of Job, or to convince the most incredulous ; ” that a person must be very credulous indeed, who can think there is any weight at all in it.

BUT still he proceeds to other arguments, and we must attend him.

“ BUT we have not yet done (says he) with this character. The finding Satan in the scene is a certain proof that the work was composed in the age we assign to it. This evil Being was little known to the people till about this time. Their great legislator, where he warns them so frequently of all the snares and temptations that would draw them to transgress the law of God, never once mentions this capital enemy of heaven ; yet this was a precaution the wisest Pagan lawgivers thought of use to keep the populace in the ways of virtue : — but, as the fulness of time drew on, they were made more and more acquainted with this evil Spirit. When Ahab for the crimes and follies of the people was to be infatuated, we have this account of the matter in the first book of Kings. (And so he quotes 1 Kings xxii. 19. to the 22<sup>d</sup> verse, of the lying Spirit in the mouth of Ahab’s prophets ; and proceeds) Satan is not here named ; and so we must believe they were yet to know little of his history : however this undertaking sufficiently declared his nature, \*”

I TRANSCRIBE thus largely to prevent mistakes.—

BUT if evil Spirits and their nature were known at this time, (*viz.* Ahab's time, and before it; for there is no appearance that this was then a new doctrine;) perhaps we need not stand much for a name, whether that of Satan were applied to them, or not. And how the doctrine of evil Spirits should be known to the Pagan legislators, and not to the Israelites, (as he contends) seems strange——to me at least, who believe that all the great doctrines of religion, revealed from the beginning, were much better preserved amongst these, than amongst any other people.

If he means, that the word Satan was not known, or used amongst them, till Ezra's time, we have an instance to the contrary, Num. xxii. 22. where, in the story of Balaam, it is said, *The angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him.* The Hebrew is, *le Satan lo, for Satan, or as Satan against him.* †

ON the other hand, in the story of Job, where Satan is said to appear among the sons of God, the word is *ba-Satan*, with a prefixed article, that is, literally, *the Adversary*: \* and so wherever he is mentioned in

that

† Maimonides, in his *More Nevachim* (Par. 3. Cap. 22.) supposes this angel that appeared to Balaam to be no other than Satan, the great adversary of mankind. Having described him, from the Talmud, thus; *Ipsa est Satan, b. e. adversarius; ipse est segmentum malum; ipse est angelus mortis*——he proceeds, a little lower down, *Hic est etiam quem vidit Balaam in visione prophetica, qui dixit ei, en ego egressus sum le-Satan in adversarium tibi.*

The same he thinks of that angel whom David saw (in *visione prophetica*, as he likewise terms it) in the time of the plague with his sword drawn, and his hand stretched out over Jerusalem, (1 Chron. xxi. 16.)

Whether this opinion were right or wrong; it shews that Maimonides, and the Jewish doctors who were in the same sentiments with him, believed that Satan was a being well-known both in David's and in Balaam's (that is, Moses's) time.

\* The word, in short, is an appellative term, applied to the great adversary of mankind by way of eminence. And what is remarkable, sometimes with the prefixed ה, or article, (the *he ba-jedi'yab*, as they call it) and sometimes without.

Thus in the book of Job, as also in the vision of Zechariah, it is written with the ה, *ba-Satan*. But 1 Chron. xxi. 1. where Satan is said to provoke David to number the people, he is called plain Satan,



that chapter. So that perhaps it is not the name Satan, strictly speaking, that shews this adversary of Job's to have been an evil Spirit, but the wicked design he had upon him : just as we conclude of that Spirit in the story above-mentioned, from his readiness to become a lying Spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, that he was one of the Satahic tribe, though his name or partyship be not told us.

BUT as to the antiquity of the notion itself, of good and bad angels or spirits, the author allows that "the history of Satan, or the evil Spirit, misunderstood or imperfectly told, in the first ages of mankind, much favoured the notion of an *evil Principle*." †

IT seems then his story was told, though but imperfectly and obscurely, and so as to be mistaken in some particulars, yet it was told however "*in the first ages of mankind*." And yet he had said, but a page before, "The history of Satan, it is evident, they, (the Jews) were acquainted with (that is, I suppose, first acquainted with) in their captivity. ‡" How shall we reconcile these passages together?

OR, does the learned writer mean, that in the captivity they were acquainted with the true history of Satan, to guard them from "that dangerous error of the *two principles* : ||" whereas before they had only a false history of him, that too much favoured that notion? It is easy to suppose things : but where is the proof?

IF the history of Satan was told, whether perfectly or imperfectly, in the first ages of mankind; I should be glad to know where it can be found that it was so, or indeed where any thing can be learned of the first

tan, without the 7. Which sufficiently shews the mistake of those who lay a stress upon the 7 or article, as if it were necessary to the making a proper name of the appellative. For we see that the Scripture uses the word Satan or *ba-Satan* indifferently, when applied to the same evil being:

And so, I might add, it does Adam, or *ba-Adam*, when applied to the first man. As appears from more than one place in the book of Job, where Adam, without the *b*, ought to be so understood.

† V. 2. p. 533.

‡ V. 2. p. 532.

|| See p. 532.

ages of mankind, but from the Bible. And were the Jews first acquainted with their Bible in the captivity?

IN the vision of Zechariah above-cited, we find Satan introduced as a Being well known. And some of his fraternity at least were known in Ahab's time; and the lying Spirit there (I am sure) appears plainly enough in a state of dependency.

THE figure which Satan makes in the book of Job (the antiquity whereof we may insist on, till disproved) is far from favouring the notion of *two independent principles*. We have the fall of angels plainly intimated to us in the same book; \* and evidently alluded to by more than one of the prophets. † In short, there is nothing in the Scripture that looks like a new revelation of the history of Satan, or should make us think the Jews were ever unacquainted with it. Nay, I think the history of the fall of man could scarce be made intelligible to them, without somewhat of the other history being known. And if Moses wrote the book of Genesis for the instruction of his people, it seems reasonable to suppose that he would let them in to the true sense of it.

UPON the whole then, I must take leave to place this notion of the learned writer, of the Jews being “acquainted with the history of Satan in their captivity;” as well as that other favourite thought, of their “learning the doctrine of a future state some small time after their thorough re-establishment;” ‡ among the mistakes which he seems to have been led into by a too great fondness for his hypothesis.

\* Job iv. 18. and xv. 15. † Isa. xiv. 12.—Ezech. xxviii. 14. ‡ V. 2. p. 533.

## SECTION VIII.

WE are now come (and I hope we shall soon dispatch this point) to “the last actor in this representation, Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite.”



And under this "person (we are told) was designed  
"the sacred writer himself."\*

THE chief argument for it is this, that Elihu "is  
"not involved in the condemnation of the three  
"friends," † in God's speech at the conclusion.

As to Grotius's conjecture, that Elihu might possibly be involved in the condemnation of the others as "a domestic or retainer to one of them," the learned writer rejects it as a "very strange imagination;" and contends for something which may seem as strange, *viz.* "an acquittal." ‡ But I should think, a perfect silence implied neither the one nor the other.

HOWEVER I see not what great service it can do him, if we allow that Elihu was not condemned, or that he was acquitted, and allow his reason likewise, *viz.* that "Elihu said nothing but what God himself repeated and confirmed—"§ And again, "It is visible to every one, who regards the two speeches of Elihu and God with the least attention, that the arguments and doctrine are the same." ¶

WE will suppose then (though it be only a supposal) that Elihu was not condemned with the others, because he spoke nothing but what was right. But how is this an argument that he must be the writer of the book, or his representative, rather than any other person of sound sense and judgment?

ON the other hand, that he was not designed to represent the writer of the book, meaning the writer here supposed, *viz.* Ezra; seems highly probable from this single circumstance: that Elihu is here described as a young man, but Ezra must at this time be well advanced in years.

FOR, to wave all other conjectures, it is plain that he led the Jews from Babylon back into their own country in the seventh year of Artaxerxes, as we learn Ezra vii. 8. And no doubt but they would have a person of some years and experience for their leader. We will suppose him only thirty. It was thirteen years

\* D. L. V. z. p. 534, 535. † Ibid. p. 538. ‡ Ibid. p. 540.  
§ Ibid. p. 538. ¶ Ibid. p. 541.

after this, viz. in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, \* that Nehemiah went up to Jerusalem with a new commission; and then it was they met with the obstructions from Sanballat, and the rest in building their city-walls. So that Ezra must then be forty three at least, and probably more. And if we allow him a reasonable time after this for the composing his poem, I suppose we shall scarce think him entitled to that apology which Elihu makes for himself (Ch. xxxii. 6.) *I am young, and ye are very old; therefore I was afraid and durst not shew you mine opinion.* Which, by the way too, is very different from that authoritative style generally used by the prophets: and he calls Ezra "one of the most eminent of God's prophets." †

THE learned writer would argue Elihu to have been a prophet, from his saying (Ch. xxxiii. 6.) *Behold I am, according to thy wish, in God's stead:* The "prophets being in God's stead to the people." ‡ But all that Elihu meant by that expression (as appears from the context) was, that he would take upon him, in this dispute with Job, to defend the cause of God. Had he been a prophet, or spoke as such, he could never, consistently with that character, have made so many mistakes as he has done, in repeating the words of Job, or giving us their meaning. For though it be true, that he performs the part of a moderator betwixt the disputants; it is very evident, he does not "moderate with perfect rectitude," § (as Mr. W. would have us think) and so as became a prophet, or his representative.

IN short, he is so far from claiming the authority of a prophet, or indeed any authority whatsoever, that he absolutely disclaims it; and ranks himself in a different class from the great men (or men of authority) as well as old men, Ch. xxxii. 9.

*Great men are not always wise, (says he) neither do the aged understand judgment.*

HE was resolved to try therefore what he could do, by the mere dint of good sense, who was neither a

\* Nehem. ii. 1. † V. 2. p. 542. ‡ Ibid. p. 535. § V. 2. p. 539.



great man nor an aged, had neither years nor authority to give weight to his discourse. And indeed he lived in a time of the world, when the one generally followed the other; and men had just so much of a superior authority over others to advise and persuade, as they could out-number them in years: of which we have frequent proofs in this book.

How then shall we reconcile these characters of youth and age, authority and no authority, so as to make Elihu a fit representative of Ezra?

THERE is but one way that I can think of, which is this—— Perhaps Ezra chose this young man to personate himself by way of disguise: that so none but connoisseurs, and such as studied the work with exactness, might find him out to be the writer of the book.

AND it must be owned, the conduct is uniform. This too is a refinement suitable to the rest. And take the whole together, there never, certainly, was a more dextrous disguise made use of, than in this extraordinary allegory. For who that had heared of the patience of Job, would ever have sought under that character for the murmuring and impatient Jews? Or for their three grand enemies, under his three professed friends and old acquaintance, who came so long a journey to visit and condole with him? Or lastly, for the good old Ezra (for some think he must at this time have been of an extreme old age) under young Elihu?

BUT still Ezra must be the author of the book of Job. And after such convincing proof of the low date and allegorical design of it, who can doubt this last particular?

“ By this time (says the learned writer) I suppose  
 “ the reader will be beforehand with me in judging,  
 “ that the author of the book could scarce be any  
 “ other than the great Ezra himself; who was a ready  
 “ scribe in the law of Moses, and had prepared his heart to  
 “ seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Is-  
 “ rael statutes and judgments. (Ezra vii. 6. 10.) For he  
 “ had

“ had the welfare of his people exceedingly at heart,  
 “ as appears from the books of Ezra and Nehemiah :  
 “ and this of Job, we have shewn, was written pur-  
 “ posely for their instruction. He made a correct  
 “ edition of the Scriptures, settled the Canon, and  
 “ added in several places throughout the books of his edition,  
 “ what appeared necessary for the illustrating, connecting,  
 “ or compleating of them. \* He is reasonably supposed  
 “ to be the author of the two books of Chronicles and  
 “ the book of Esther. It was a common tradition too  
 “ among the Jews, that he was the same as Malachi.  
 “ And his great reputation as a ready scribe in the  
 “ law of Moses, apparently gave birth to that wretch-  
 “ ed fable of the destruction of the Scriptures in the  
 “ Babylonish captivity, and the restoration of them by  
 “ Ezra through divine inspiration.”

I HAVE transcribed the whole of this *encomium*, not to defraud Ezra of his due praise. And I think we may allow it all, except his writing the book of Job for the instruction of the people (which is the point in question) and it will not reach an hair's breadth towards proving Ezra to be the author of this book.

BUT what is most observable is, that, even in this full character of him, there is one qualification wanting, which seems absolutely necessary for the writer of such a book : I mean, a genius for poetry, and that of the sublimest sort. † For such, beyond all dispute, is

\* Prideaux's Conn. P. 1. B. 5.

† I hope I may, without offence, suppose a genius required to the composing such a work as this, and without any detriment to its authority as a sacred writing. Since the difference of style, observable in the books of holy Writ, and particularly those of the Prophets compared with each other, shews the truth of that observation of Maimonides (*More Nev. Par. 2. Cap. 29.*) *Unumquemque prophetarum peculiare quid habere; et eâ linguâ, eaque loquendi ratione, quæ ipsi est familiaris et consueta, ipsum impelli a prophetia sua ad loquendum, &c.* That each prophet has a style or language peculiar to himself, &c. Whence it seems reasonable to conclude, that God, when he sent them with his messages, or moved them to write, did not create their faculties anew, or give a genius where there was none; but made use of those abilities they had before,



is that which is here exhibited to us. There is something so grand and magnificent in the idea given us throughout of the great Creator of all things, and the wonders of his creation and providence, as can scarce be paralleled in any other part of holy Writ : unless we except some passages in Isaiah, or in David's psalms, or the songs of Moses. Which last, indeed, have a beauty and sublimity in them beyond expression; and might seem to favour the opinion that ascribes the book of Job to Moses, either as the author or translator. And next to Job himself, perhaps none can have a better title to it.

SINCE so many of the learned therefore have adjudged the book to Moses, as the parent by translation at least, if not the original author; and as this opinion has somewhat of the authority of a tradition to support it : suppose we should compare it with this new conjecture of Mr. W——n's, and see on which side the advantage lies.

LET us hear then what bishop Patrick says upon this subject, in the preface to his paraphrase on Job, “ This book (says he) gives so high an encourage-  
 “ ment to faith and patience, and contains such powerful comforts for the afflicted; that the old tradition  
 “ is, Moses could not find any thing like it for the  
 “ support and satisfaction of the Israelites in their  
 “ Egyptian bondage : and therefore took the pains  
 “ to translate it into their language out of the Sy-  
 “ riac, wherein it was first written. Thus he, who  
 “ writes the commentaries upon this book under the  
 “ name of Origen, tells us; that he found in *antiquo-*  
 “ *rum dictis, in the sayings of the ancients*, that when  
 “ the great Moses was sent by God into Egypt, and  
 “ beheld the affliction of the children of Israel to be  
 “ so grievous, that nothing he could say was able to  
 “ comfort them in that lamentable condition; he de-

whether natural or acquired : over-ruling them so far, however, as to preserve them from error; and enabling them to deliver truths equally divine, whether clothed in the herdsman's style, as that of Amos, or the more lofty and elegant one of Isaiah, suited (as the commentators speak) to his noble birth and education.

“ clared

“clared to them the terrible sufferings of Job, with  
 “his happy deliverance; and setting them down in  
 “writing also, gave this book to that distressed peo-  
 “ple. That reading these things in their several tribes  
 “and families, and hearing how sorely this blessed  
 “man suffered; they might comfort and exhort one  
 “another to endure with patience and thanksgiving  
 “the evils which encompassed them: and hearing  
 “withal how bountifully God rewarded Job for his  
 “patience, they might hope for deliverance, and ex-  
 “pect the benefit of a blessed reward of their la-  
 “bours.”

HERE then was an occasion every way great and  
 fit, for the writing such a book as this; or, if already  
 written, for translating, and presenting it to a peo-  
 ple under the deepest distress; and who at the same  
 time had not one prophet, that we read of, to encour-  
 age them by his predictions: whereas the Jews, in  
 Ezra's time, had no less than three; and their diffi-  
 culties and distresses were not comparable to those of  
 the Israelites in Egypt.

BUT bishop Patrick hath given us, from the same old  
 author of the commentaries upon Job, a speech which  
 he ascribes to Moses upon this occasion, and which is  
 very well worth our notice.

“Be ye constant, O children of Israel, (said Mo-  
 “ses, with a pleasing countenance, when he delivered  
 “this book into their hands) do not faint in your  
 “minds, O ye posterity of Abraham, but suffer grief  
 “and bear these evils patiently, as that man in the  
 “land of Uz did, whose name was Job: who though  
 “he was a righteous and faithful person, in whom  
 “was no fault, yet suffered the sorest torments by the  
 “malice of the Devil; as you do now most unjustly  
 “from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They treat you  
 “indeed very basely, and have enslaved you without  
 “any fault of yours, &c. But do not despair of a  
 “better condition; you shall be delivered as Job was,  
 “and have a reward of your tribulations, like that  
 “which God gave to him.”— ‘There follows a great  
 ‘deal



“deal more (adds the bishop) in that writer to the same purpose.”——

Now this is something— Here is real fact and history, set forth by way of example and encouragement.

BUT what sort of a speech can we suppose Ezra to make with his allegorical poem?

“ I present you with a poem, my good friends,  
 “ which will be a comfort and encouragement to you  
 “ in all your troubles and distresses. You are to know,  
 “ There was a man above a thousand years ago, that  
 “ was sadly afflicted as you are : let this man therefore, in my poem, stand for the Jewish people. He  
 “ had three friends likewise, whether false or true,  
 “ that came with a pretence to comfort him, but really added to his afflictions by their hard censures  
 “ of him : let these therefore stand for Sanballat,  
 “ Geshem and Tobiah, your three great enemies. He  
 “ had a wife moreover, that endeavoured to pervert  
 “ him, as the idolatrous wives do some of you : and  
 “ though the tradition does not say that he put away  
 “ his wife, yet you must put away yours. He had likewise Satan for an adversary against him, as you have  
 “ now : though Satan was not known in those days.  
 “ And yet with all these difficulties he was delivered at last : as you need not doubt but you yourselves will  
 “ be; for you are to remember that he personates you.  
 “ And this being a piece wholly dramatical and allegorical, I can very easily, with the turn of a finger,  
 “ (and you see I have done it) introduce the θεὸν ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, to do what wonders I please.”

WHO can suppose, but such a speech, and such a present as this, must needs be highly consolatory, and greatly to their satisfaction?

I HOPE the learned writer will excuse it, if there be any thing low or ludicrous in this representation : as I had no other way to set the thing together in one view, and in a proper light. And I think it needs no farther confutation.

IN the course of his reasoning I have been often struck with surprise to see him very earnestly endeavouring

vouring to support his allegorical interpretation of the book of Job, by arguments drawn from the contradictions which he fancies he has there espied to the truth of the history or tradition, upon which his allegory is built. Than which, in my apprehension, there can scarce be a greater absurdity. And because I may, very possibly, be mistaken; or others may see things in a different light; I shall venture to give the following illustration of my sense of this matter.

THE most celebrated lines, perhaps, in all our English poetry, are those of Sir John Denham in Coopers Hill: where he wishes for himself as a poet that he could flow like the river Thames; or that his strains of verse had the same good qualities with that river.

*O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream  
My great example, as it is my theme!  
Though deep, yet clear; though gentle, yet not dull;  
Strong without rage; without o'erflowing full.*

THOUGH this be a simile, rather than an allegory, it will serve our turn as well: the difference, as I take it, being this; that in a simile the things compared are both of them expressed, in an allegory one is understood.\* But still the same likeness is required betwixt

\* One of the finest allegories we meet with in the Classics is Horace's Ode 14. L. 1. *O navis, referent in mare te novi fluctus*, &c. Where, under the figure of a ship just escaped a storm, and within view of its port, but in danger of being driven to sea again to encounter the same hazards and distresses as before; he warns his countrymen against engaging anew in civil broils. Had the other term of the comparison, viz. the republic, as well as the ship, been here expressed; the allegory had been turned into a simile. But Horace chose the bolder figure, as not too bold for an Ode, and perhaps fitter for his purpose. And as he has conducted it with great art and elegance; so, I think, he has shewn his judgment in contracting it within the compass of five short stanza's. For as allegory is a very delicate thing, it might have puzzled even his inventive genius to have carried it much farther.

But if the learned writer will not take it amiss, I should desire him to consider attentively this allegorical Ode of Horace. And he will perceive, that though every thing therein may be accommodated to a republic, yet it is true in the literal or primary sense only of a ship; and that there is not one single stroke in it that can be understood of a republic, and not of a ship. And this might



twixt the thing expressed and understood, as if both had been expressed.

Now if we consider what it is that strikes and pleases us in this simile, we shall find there are two things that contribute to its perfection, and it is necessary that they both concur. One is, the surprising agreement which the poet here shews betwixt the properties of a good poem and those of a fine river; and the other, his exact description of the river Thames, which is supposed to have all these properties. For were the Thames otherwise than it is here described; for instance, shallow and foul instead of deep and clear; these verses, which are now so justly admired, must needs appear in a most ridiculous light; and every one that should chance to pass by the river, would say, Sir John Denham was either blind or whimsical. Nor would it be sufficient to urge in his defence, that he meant not the real Thames, but a certain imaginary, allegorical, or similitudinary one——or what shall I call it?

If we apply this to the poem before us, must it not seem equally absurd, to make the TRUE Job a proverb of patience, the ALLEGORICAL one impatient to an extravagance: to make true friends in the history or fable, to become false friends in the moral? This must needs appear shocking and unnatural, though we were to regard the poem as intended only for an idle amusement. But when we look upon it in another view, as designed for the use the learned writer supposes, one is still more surprised at his way of thinking. For he supposes this allegory, or riddle, to be of more efficacy to quiet the minds of the Jewish people under their present difficulties, than the living voices of three of

might shew him his mistake, in applying passages in the book of Job to the Jewish people (that is, the person behind the curtain, like the republic in the other allegory) merely because they cannot be understood of Job: which is directly annihilating the allegory he would establish. For it is as plain, that, in an allegory, two things or persons must be concerned, as that two and two must go to make four.

their

their prophets, who had assured them of an happy issue to their undertaking in the building their city and temple, and of great temporal blessings in future; the very thing for which Ezra (according to him) composed this allegorical poem. "For the moral of this dramatic piece (says he) was to assure the people, represented under the person of this venerable patriarch, of those great temporal blessings which the three prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi had predicted." \* — So that the predictions of their prophets (we must suppose) were a thing of little consideration, when compared with this wonderful production.

If I have mistaken the learned writer, I shall be sorry for it; and he must impute it to his own obscurity, or to my dullness. — But it is time to put an end to these remarks.

\* V. 2. p. 548.

## SECTION IX.

SINCE I have taken the liberty to examine and reject the learned writer's notion of the book of Job, it may be expected I should give my own; and I shall do it very freely.

I INCLINE then to the sentiments of those who believe this book to be the oldest in the world; that it was written, probably, by Job himself; and that it contains, in the main, a true history.

AND this opinion I should think sufficiently supported, if I can answer the objections brought by learned men against it. Nevertheless in considering these, there may possibly arise some more direct and positive proofs, or probabilities, in favour of it.

AND first I would observe, that there is nothing in the frame or cast of the work itself, that is inconsistent with its being of the age we contend for.

If this poem be a drama, it appears by the simplicity of its composition to be of the most ancient kind; perhaps the first that ever was written. It is certain, that



that in the order of narration it differs nothing from an exact history. If any thing can be called dramatical, it is only the dialogue part; but how little of the story have we there? The character of Job, and his prosperity, together with the sudden change of his condition, and the various afflictions that befel him, are told us in the first two chapters, by the writer of the book himself; not left to rise out of the action of the poem, as is the method of the drama. In like manner, his restoration to a flourishing condition twice as great as at the first, is told us in the same plain style and method, not by the actors but historian, from ver. 7. of chap. xlii. to the end.

Now supposing the facts here related to be true, viz. that there was such a man as Job, who from a prosperous condition fell into that variety of miseries here described; had three friends that came to visit him, and entered into a long conversation with him about the nature of afflictions, wherein they charge him with some secret wickedness as the cause of all his sufferings; from which he endeavours to vindicate himself, and is at last vindicated by the supreme Judge, the great Discerner of hearts: has all his griefs removed, his health renewed, his numerous family restored, his wealth and honours doubled, and his life prolonged as a reward of his integrity. I say, supposing all these facts to be true, how was it possible for them to be related in a plainer manner, or a more exact and natural order, than we here find them? And is not a plain and orderly relation of facts, history?

BUT not to dispute about words, supposing we should allow it from the dialogue part to be called a drama; yet this, I conceive, would neither be an argument against the historical truth of the facts here related, nor yet a proof that the book was written at any great distance from the date of the facts. For as to what the author suggests, that the supposing it a dramatic composition must "of consequence bring it down to an age remote from that of the sub-  
"ject."

“ject;” \* I apprehend it can be only meant of a drama, in the sense that was necessary for his purpose; that is, merely a work of imagination, where the writer was at liberty to depart from the truth of history or tradition, and to alter the facts and characters as he pleased. In such a case indeed, it would be necessary that the subject of the drama should be so far back removed into the obscure and fabulous ages of the world, as that there should be no remains of history, that carried any certainty with it, to contradict the shape or colourings which the poet had a mind to give his piece.

BUT now suppose it a drama, such as one of our countryman Shakespear's, where the true history of our kings is preserved, and yet represented in the dramatic way; and the consequence will be quite otherwise. I mean, the nearer it was written to the times wherein the events happened, the better; because the reader would have a better assurance of the truth of things. A circumstance so necessary to give satisfaction to the mind; that where truth, or the appearance of it is wanting, it is impossible that a poem should please any more than a history. And if the appearance of truth be so necessary; the thing itself, if it can be had, must certainly be better.

EVEN Aristotle tells us, that a poet is never the less a poet, *καὶ ἂν ἀρα συμβῇ γινόμενα ποιεῖν though the subject of his Poem be a true story*; † provided it be handled in a proper manner, and be such as is worthy to be thus recorded. And the reason seems clear. For since poetry, like painting, is but imitation; the skill of the one artist as well as the other, is as much shewn in copying a true story, and giving

\* Div. Leg. V. 2. p. 484.

† Arist. Περὶ ποιητικῆς, κατ. 9. pag. 29. Edit. Cantab. 1696. Ἄλλοι δὲ ἐκ τούτων ὅτι τὸν ποιητὴν μάλιστα τῶν μύθων εἶναι δεῖ ποιητικῆς, ἢ τῶν μέτρων, ὅσον ποιητὴς κατὰ τὸν μίμησιν ἐστίν. Μιμήται δὲ τὰς πράξεις. καὶ ἂν ἀρα συμβῇ γινόμενα ποιῆναι, ὅθεν ἴστω ποιητὴς ἐστίν· τῶν γὰρ γινόμενων εἶνα δεῖ καλεῖσθαι τοιαῦτα εἶναι, ὅσα αὐτοὶ εἰδὼς γινώσκουσιν, ἢ διὰ τὰς γινώσκουσιν, καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς αὐτῶν ποιητὴς ἐστίν.



it a beautiful likeness; as in inventing a false one that shall appear like truth. It is not necessary, that the *mythos* (which, as the same critic tells us, distinguishes or denominates a poet, rather than the metre) should be a feigned story; nor does *μῦθος*, or *fabula*, with the ancients, always denote a fiction. It is sufficient, if it be a story with surprising incidents, that may be useful in the example. And as the story of Job is eminently such, it is undoubtedly a proper subject for poetry. But it is the rarity of true stories of this kind, that makes the poet rack his invention for some agreeable fiction. \*

BUT to proceed with our author. As to what he further says that "Those who are inclined to suppose this work of the highest antiquity, and to think it an exact historical relation of Job's sufferings and patience, and of God's extraordinary dispensations towards him, recorded by his own hand, are yet forced to own the introduction and conclusion to be of another nature; and added by a later writer, to give that fulness and integrity, which works of imagination, and only such works require.†" This to me, I own, is perfectly unintelligible.

MUST a story of necessity be false or feigned, because it is compleat? We have a full and entire history indeed of Job's afflictions, his behaviour under them, and his happy restoration, told in order in this book. But is it therefore incredible that it should be a true history? This, one would think, can never be the author's meaning: for he himself allows the main *stamina* of the history to be fact and reality. "As to the person of Job, (says he) the eminence of his

\* There is an epistle of Pliny (L. 8. Ep. 4.) where he commends his friend Caninius for the choice he had made of the war with the Daci for the subject of a Greek poem. *Nam quæ tam recent, tam copiosa, tam lata, quæ denique (says he) tam poetica, et, quanquam in verissimis rebus, tam fabulosa materia.* If any one can doubt what he means by his *fabulosa materia*, and that in *verissimis rebus*—let him read on, and he will find him explaining himself in a recital of a variety of uncommon or surprising incidents.

† V. 2. Part. 2. p. 483, 484.

"cha-

“character, his fortitude and patience in afflictions, and  
“his preceding and subsequent felicity, these are re-  
“alities so unquestionable, that a man must set aside  
“sacred antiquity, before he can admit a doubt con-  
“cerning them.” \*

Now these realities which he allows to be so unquestionable, are evidently the very ground and argument of the whole book. It is the very story in little, which is there handled more at large. And what there is in the dialogue interposed that does not carry the same appearance of reality in it, I confess, is beyond my skill to find out. If it be not a real original conversation, I mean the substance of it committed to writing; I will venture to say, it is the most like it that ever was penned. It has such an air of truth throughout, the several passions of the speakers kindling with the heat of the debate, and every one so much in earnest in the point he would defend; that one is naturally led to conclude that it was taken from the life, and recorded by one of those who were present at the conversation, while the substance of it was still fresh upon his memory: If not Job himself (which seems to me most probable) perhaps the youngest of the company Elihu; who might live long enough to add the account of Job's death to the other circumstances of his felicity—A point which, if necessary to complete the history, was no way necessary to the *drama*, the integrity whereof (according to the critics) requires but one entire action.

I AM aware indeed, that no argument can be drawn with certainty for the historical truth of any thing, merely from the likeness which it bears to truth: because an able hand will give this colouring to the meekest fiction. We admire the dialogues of Cicero for that natural cast thrown over them so like a real conversation, that the reader can scarce help thinking himself present and a partaker of the debate. And yet we are very sure, from Tully's own account of them,

†. Ibid. p 483.



that many things are therein feigned, or represented as spoken, which were never spoke at all. \*

HOWEVER it may be said in abatement to this, that Tully never could have feigned so well, nor have drawn these conversations so much to the life, if he had not been often present and engaged in real ones of the same kind.

"I venture to affirm (says an author commended by Mr. W——n) that a poet describes nothing so happily as what he has seen, nor mimicks truly other manners than those whose originals he has practised and known." † If this author be in the right, it is impossible that Ezra could be the writer of the book of Job; or that any other person in or near his time should give so true a representation of the manners of an age so distant and so different from his own.

BUT Tully's case was far otherwise. He entertains us with philosophical conversations and disputes, such as he himself had often bore a part in. Nay he tells us, with respect to some of them, that he wrote them down; *eisdem fere verbis ut actum disputatumque est*, || in the very same words almost, in which the real oral disputation had been carried on in the school which he himself had opened for this purpose.

AND yet if I may venture to criticize so excellent a writer, and so justly celebrated; (and why not, if we can shew a writing of superior excellence?) his Persons seem to me to argue their points in too cool, dispassionate a manner; so that in this particular, I am inclined to think, he has departed somewhat from the life. For real disputes in conversation, nay and philosophical questions canvassed in the schools, are used to be carried on with something more of heat, and somewhat less of ceremony, than is to be observed in

\* *Puto fore ut cum legas, mirere id nos locutos esse inter nos* (says Tully to Varro, to whom he had given the part of a speaker in some of these dialogues) *quod nunquam locuti sumus, sed nostri morem dialogorum*, Cic. Epist. fam. 9. 8.

† Enquiry into Homer's life and writings, p. 29.

|| See Tusc. Disp. 2. C. 3. p. 131. Ed. Davies.

Tully's dialogues. And therefore it is highly probable, that in the representation he has given us of these philosophical conversations, he may have omitted many things that were thrown out in the heat of the debate; not quite so reconcileable perhaps with the professed apathy of a stoick, or the dignity of a Roman senator: and so we may have less of nature in these dialogues, in proportion as there is a greater regard paid to the exactness of decorum.

BUT in the dialogue before us it is otherwise. And every disputant pursues his point with a warmth and earnestness, which is seldom seen but in real contentions, where the parties are greatly interested in the issue of the dispute; and is difficult to be counterfeited by a cool dispassionate writer in his closet.

IN a word, if this conversation and dispute betwixt Job and his friends, be not a real genuine thing, taken from the fact, and transcribed from the original; but as Mr. (W——n supposes) merely a work of imagination; it is certain the author had the finest imagination in the world. For it is so much like reality, that we may defy the nicest critic to distinguish it.

AND this is all that is intended by this Argument, viz. to shew, that for any thing that appears to the contrary, the dialogue before us may, like one of Tully's, be the substance of a real conversation; and consequently bear date in, or near the time when this conversation was held.

I say the substance of a real conversation. For I would not be understood as if I thought that we had here the conversation in the very words used by Job and his friends. No, I am not of the opinion of a certain modern author just now quoted, that the first mortals talked in verse or measure.\* I suppose the real dialogue was held in prose, and that we have here the substance of it, the reasonings and arguments on both sides, recorded in verse; as many things among the ancients were, especially those which carried a moral instruction with them, for the sake of

\* Enquiry into Homer's life, p. 39.



being more easily learned and retained in memory. And the simplicity of the Hebrew poetry made this, perhaps, no very difficult task to the writer.

To which if we add an allowance for the story's being told in the poetical language, and in a style and manner suited to the genius of those ancient times; we shall be able to give a tolerable answer to all the objections that have been urged by Mons. Le Clerc, and others, against the truth of the history.

Le Clerc indeed says in one place, that "the book of Job is an history treated in a poetical manner." Which is the opinion of the learned Grotius, and, if rightly understood, may be admitted.

BUT then in another place he calls it a history treated in the form of a parable ("*une histoire, qu'on traite en forme de parabole.*") This to me, I own, is scarce intelligible: for I take a parable to be a fiction throughout.

THE question amongst the learned is, whether the book of Job contain a history or a parable: And this opinion seems to make it both. But he was himself but ill satisfied with this account of the book; and therefore in his commentary upon Job, as his friend the prefacer tells us, he retracts his former sentiments, and inclines to think it a mere parable. His argument for it is drawn from some passages in the book, the historical truth whereof he looks upon as highly improbable; and therefore the story, he thinks, can be no other than a parable.

Now though the very ground of this argument appears to me a great absurdity; because every thing, even in a parable, ought to be related in a probable manner; yet as it seems to reflect a disparagement on the book itself, I shall briefly consider the instances he produces.

THE first is, that of Job's sons feasting in their houses, every one their day, (ch. i. 4.) which he interprets as if they had lived in a continued course of revellings: and says, it is contrary to the manners of the Eastern people, and therefore highly improbable to be true.

BUT

BUT sure, there is no necessity from the text of supposing that they made this round of feasting above once a year: and therefore this objection of Le Clerc's, which is urged in his *Sentimens de Theolog.* is retracted, or at least softned, in his commentary upon Job; where he supposes there might be some interval betwixt their feastings. *Credibile tamen est, hebdomade conviviorum exacta, interstitium aliquod fuisse.*

HIS next argument for its being a parable and not a true history, is drawn from ch. i. 6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*

THIS looks indeed to be very much in the poetical way; and a poem we allow it to be. But without detracting from the truth of the history: for certainly it is in the Poet's power to tell truth if he please. So says old Hesiod, even when poetry was become much more encumbered with fiction than it was at first.

Ἰδμεν δ', εἰ κ' ἐβελωμεν ἀληθεα μυθησασθαι.

BUT this objection shall be considered more at large in the next section.

HE further objects the great improbability of God's being moved to destroy or ruin Job without cause, as is said ch. ii. 3. *sans avoir de sujet.*

BUT I apprehend the most that can be meant by that expression is, without his desert; (according to the usual way of speaking) or without any signal guilt, to draw upon him so signal a calamity. Not but that there might be other very weighty causes or reasons for it. For the divine wisdom (we may be sure) neither does or suffers any thing without cause, that is, without a sufficient reason.

THAT good men are sometimes extremely afflicted, and that not only in their outward estate but in their persons, as Job was; is a fact too plain to be denied. And whether God permits wicked spirits, or wicked men, or any thing else to be the immediate instrument of a good man's sufferings, makes no al-



teration in the thing itself; and therefore this objection is of no force.

To all which might be added, that the words will bear a very different construction from that which Le Clerc puts upon them. For the adverb *chinmam* may as well be joined with the first verb as the last; and then the sense will be this, *Hast thou considered my servant Job that he still retains his integrity, and in vain hast thou excited me to ruin him.* Thus it is translated, and not amiss, by Junius and Tremellius.

WHAT he says of the unlikelihood of so many misfortunes falling all at once upon this good man, so that the messenger of one bad piece of news had no sooner done speaking, but another and another comes; seems to have somewhat more of reason in it. And yet the unlikelihood of a thing, or its very rarely happening thus, is no argument against the truth or credibility of it; especially in a case so extraordinary as this, where the great adversary of mankind, who delights in doing mischief, had such a length of chain indulged him.

BUT suppose we should here claim an allowance for the poetical way of describing things in expressions somewhat figurative and hyperbolical. It is very usual in common speech to say, when a man's misfortunes succeed each other very soon, that they followed close upon the heels of one another. Job's messengers here do the same; and a poet (as I take it) may have the privilege of drawing out a figure of speech to its full length.

THE other circumstance he takes notice of, viz. of only one servant escaping with the news of each calamity, may be exactly according to the fact, for any thing that appears to the contrary: or if not, makes no material alteration in the substance of the history. Beside that it is not told us by the historian, but by each messenger who brought the bad news: and who probably, might think so in the hurry of his fears, though there were others saved beside himself. For when people are dispersed in a fright, and run different

sent ways; one who finds himself alone after a long flight, may easily conclude himself the only person that escaped.

ANOTHER strange event this learned man takes notice of, as scarcely reconcileable with the truth of history, is that of the fire from heaven, or lightning that destroyed seven thousand sheep at once.

BUT to this it must be answered, as before, that we do not pretend to account for this, or the other particulars, in the natural and ordinary way: for it appears from the history itself, that there was something supernatural in it. It was the prince of the power of the air (as he is called in scripture) that raised this storm of thunder, and caused perhaps an extraordinary hail-shower with it; such as that recorded, *Exod. ix.* which destroyed both man and beast that were left without shelter in the field: or that which destroyed the army of the confederate kings, *Josh. x. 11.* Or—Who shall say how far the power of this evil spirit may extend, when suffered to exert it?

THE circumstance of Job's lying in the ashes, and his three friends with him, for seven days and seven nights without speaking, is likewise taken notice of by *Monf. Le Clerc*; and has indeed the same poetical aspect with some other circumstances of the story. And yet might be literally true, and agreeable to the manners of those ancient times (for any thing that we know to the contrary) though we should understand it of an absolute silence. \* A long silence is a very natural effect

\* The writer of the life of *Æschylus* tells us, that the old poet was ridiculed by *Aristophanes* for overdoing in what he calls the *Βάρος*, the gravity and importance, or majestic air of his personages: and particularly, because in his play called *Niobe*, *Æschylus* represents her as sitting three days together on the tomb of her children, covered with a veil, and observing a profound silence. But *Aristophanes*, whose genius seems wholly turned to buffoonry, was a very incompetent judge of what is proper in grave and serious subjects. As *Æschylus* makes *Niobe* sit for three days silent; so *Job* and his friends (who had at least as mournful a subject for their grief) might observe a seven days silence, without transgressing either nature, or the laws and customs of their age and country,



effect of an extraordinary grief, which overwhelms the mind, and creates a sort of stupor and astonishment—And moreover the rules of decorum are very different in different ages and countries.

BUT by the reason here given for the silence of those friends, *viz.* because they saw Job's grief was very great, too great perhaps to admit of any long or formal consolatory discourses; they might be only silent as to this point for the first seven days—And considering the nature of that discourse they afterwards had with him, they would not have been a jot too grave or modest, if they had been silent seven days longer. And this they might have been perhaps, had not their afflicted friend, by bursting forth into that bitter complaint, (Ch. iii.) opened a way for them to interpose with their advice.

BUT to proceed with Mons. Le Clerc—"After this (says he) Job begins to complain heavily of his misfortunes, and to vaunt his innocence very highly. His friends reply, and contend that he must needs be very culpable, since God who is just, had thus afflicted him. All these circumstances (says he) favour much of the parable."

BUT this account of the matter is far from being just. Job indeed begins the dialogue with a very mournful complaint of the misery of his condition (Ch. iii.) but not a syllable is said of his innocence; much less in a vaunting way. No, it is the next speaker Eliphaz, that begins with him upon this topic, though he opens it with some tenderness; and chuses rather to say in general, that it is for their crimes that men are punished, than directly to charge

It is remarkable, that we find the prophet Ezekiel (Ch. iii. 15.) sitting with his brethren of the captivity by the river Chebar for seven days astonished (*ſtaſebek, tacens inter eos,* says the Chaldee Paraphrast) struck dumb, as it were, at the apprehension of their present miseries; and the still greater desolation that was coming on his country. Ezekiel, no doubt, was very conversant with the book of Job, and by his own behaviour on this occasion, takes off all suspicion of impropriety from the other,

his

his friend as being a criminal. Job however understood his meaning, as we see by his reply. And then the other two friends appearing to be in the same sentiments with Eliphaz, the dispute is carried on with great warmth on both sides, and in a way extremely natural and probable. So that it is certain nothing can be concluded from hence against the historical truth of it.

He proceeds—"Neither can one persuade one's self without pain, that God should make so long a discourse from a cloud, as the author ascribes to him." This shall be considered in the following section.

"THE re-establishment of Job (as he goes on) smells likewise much of the parable. The author counts up all his cattle, and says he had just so many children given him as he had before."

BUT where is the improbability of Job's having just as many children given him as he had before? And as to the cattle, or his substance; had it been only said, that God gave him twice as much wealth as he had before, I presume there would be no objection. The exception then is only against the manner of telling us this plain truth, by reckoning up every hoof of cattle, and the several sorts of them: which perhaps was the usual way of recording things in a language and an age of the greatest simplicity.

BUT "the author adds, (says he) that Job after all this lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his fourth generation," &c.

HIS remark upon this is very extraordinary, viz. that Job, according to this account, must have lived about two hundred years; and that this length of life will suit no time assigned for Job's existence. If, with Grotius, we say he lived while the Israelites wandered in the desert; the lives of men were then much shorter than two hundred years: if with others, that he lived soon after the flood; the lives of men were then much longer.

BUT now, if the life of man after the flood shortened by degrees; I hope we may suppose a time betwixt the



the other two points that will agree very well with the life of Job. Or should we say, that God lengthened out his life beyond the common term, as an extraordinary favour, there can be nothing unlikely in this, nay it is highly correspondent with the other instances of the divine bounty that were shewn him.

AND thus much for the little exceptions to the historical truth of the matters told us in the book of Job, intending to prove it a parable, and not a true history. The most formidable is still behind, and shall be considered in the next section.

## S E C T X.

THE chief exception, with men of learning, to the historical truth of the book of Job, is taken from the supernatural and surprizing incidents which we meet with there: such as that of the sons of God presenting themselves before Jehovah, at the beginning of the book; and the divine interposition at the conclusion.

It was this, I suppose, that led the learned Grotius to declare his opinion of it thus, *Res verè gesta est, sed poeticè tractata*: that it is in substance a true history, but told in a poetical manner. Which, if rightly understood, may be admitted. But Grotius, surely, who supposed the book to be written at the distance of about a thousand years from the date of the subject whereof it treats, can scarce be thought to have believed that there was much of the true history in it.

A POEM it is allowed to be on all hands. But here we must proceed with caution.

THE idea we have formed to ourselves of poetry from an early acquaintance with the Heathen poets, or the rules laid down by modern critics, may give

\* Qui more parabolico conscriptam esse hanc historiam opinantur in hoc serè acquiescent, ad eam adscita esse ornamenta Dramatis vel Tragediæ; quibus non nimis presse insistendum. *Schultens Not. in Cap. 58. 1.*

us a wrong notion of the poem now before us, unless we take care to keep up in our minds a lively sense of its divinity, and the real inspiration of the writer. For in this view, the terms so commonly made use of, machinery, fiction or invention, must be dropped, as belonging merely to the productions of the uninspired, or the false pretenders to inspiration. We dare not use them of a poem, or any part of it, written under the direction of the Deity; which can leave no room for any human artifice of this kind.

To be plain—These strokes of the marvellous (as a French critic might be apt to call them) are in reality not so much a poetical, as a prophetic way of representing things to the mind in the strongest images, authorized by God himself in holy scripture, and the usual style wherein his prophets were commanded to deliver the most sacred and most certain truths.

THEY are a good proof therefore of the antiquity of the book, but no argument at all against the truth of the history contained in it.

I SAY, they are only the prophetic way of telling us how a thing was done, which was really done, though in a way to us invisible, viz. how Job was so remarkably afflicted, and so wonderfully restored by the divine providence.

THE manner how his providence administers things though secret and invisible to us, is known to God, and known to his prophets, whensoever he is pleased to reveal it to them. And whether things are done, or not done, in the same manner as they appear to the prophet in vision, or as he is directed to describe them; this at least, is the way wherein infinite wisdom would have them described and represented to us; and in this we are to acquiesce, and to account it for the wisest and the best.

To quarrel with our maker about this way of proceeding, would be to blame him for conveying truths to us in the most affecting and agreeable manner: or  
for



for creating us with those faculties, which are fitted to receive truths thus conveyed. For the most important truths, as we are framed at present, can make but a slight impression on the mind, unless they enter first like a picture, into the imagination, and from thence are stamped upon the memory.

To say how much of these prophetic representations is to be understood in a literal, and how much in a parabolical sense, is neither necessary perhaps, nor possible: because we know very little of the laws by which the invisible world is governed. Secret things belong to God. But if it be no objection to the truth of any fact, to say the providence of God so ordered it; neither can it be so, for a prophet or inspired person to tell us how the providence of God brought it to pass. The fact is still the same; only impressed upon the mind with greater clearness and with more authority, when attended with such circumstances in the relation, as none but God himself could reveal.

It is perhaps difficult to conceive in what manner God was pleased to communicate himself to the ancient prophets, so as to give them a certainty of the inspiration. And so are most things difficult to conceive, which we ourselves have never had the experience of. But that it is very possible, and very easy, for the great father of spirits to communicate his will to the soul of man in a way extraordinary, and with so much light as to give him a certainty both of the things suggested and their author; is what, I presume, no reasonable man can doubt. And that thus he did communicate himself to the prophets, we have abundant reason to believe from the miraculous proofs they gave of it.

PHILOSOPHICAL men, who have reasoned of the nature of our future happiness, have with great probability concluded, that we shall then find ourselves indued with a set of new faculties or senses: or that there are powers which now lie dormant in the soul, clogged and limited as it is by this earthly body, which will be then awakened, and exert themselves with freedom

freedom about their proper objects. Perhaps the power of vision in the prophets may be something of this kind; a new faculty or sense awakened and excited in them, which may be to them as certain and infallible as any other of their senses.

THIS at least is very observable; that, throughout the holy scriptures, there is from first to last, a great uniformity in the manner of their visions, as they themselves describe it to us, which is this: that the prophet is admitted to a sight and hearing of those secret consultations which the deity is pleased to hold, or in condescension to our capacities represents himself as holding, in the presence of his angels, or that heavenly host, that wait beside his throne.

ST. Paul in the new testament describes his own visions thus; that *he was caught up into the third heaven*; \* and again, that *he was caught up into paradise*,† and there heard those ἀπόκρυφα πρῶτα, *mysterious things*, which either he was not able, or not allowed to utter.

AND St. John, in the Revelation, tells us, that he *looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven: And the first voice which he heard, said, come up hither, and I will shew thee things which shall be hereafter. And immediately he was in the spirit; and behold, a Throne was set in heaven, || &c.*

THE prophet, in short, is admitted to the divine presence, and sees and hears the things he is commissioned to relate; that is, (and it is all, I think, which it concerns us to know) hath as clear and certain a perception of them, as if they had been the objects of his bodily sight and hearing.

THE Story told us, 2 Kings vi. of the vision vouchsafed Elisha's servant, is very remarkable to our purpose. The man going forth early in the morning, saw a great army of their enemies the Syrians compassing the city; and surpris'd and terrified at the sight, cries out, *Alas, my master, how shall we do? But Elisha bids him, fear not: for they that be with us,*

\* 2 Cor. xii. 2.

† 2 Cor. xii. 4.

|| Rev. iv. 1, 2.



are more than they that be with them. It follows, *And Elisha prayed and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.* †

THE sight or vision here was as real and as certain, of an host of angels encamping round about Elisha to defend him; as the other of the host of Syrians who had compassed the city to apprehend him; and is described, we see, in terms as strong.

AND it is observable of St. Paul's visions above-mentioned, they made so strong and lively an impression on him, that whether he saw them *in the body or out of the body, he could not tell.* ‖ That is, the thing was as real and certain to him, as if he had been actually transported to heaven, or paradise, and had seen and heard things with his eyes and ears: for how else was it possible for such a doubt to arise within his breast? And till we know more of the nature of the human soul, and what it is capable of, or how it may be affected by other spiritual beings, and especially its omnipotent creator; all objections we can form to ourselves against this method of revelation, will be only conjecturing and reasoning in the dark.

If we consider the prophetic visions under the Old Testament, we find them exactly corresponding with those of St. Paul and St. John in the New. The

† 2 Kings vi. 15, 16, 17.

‖ There are two ways of understanding these words of St. Paul, whether *in the body, or out of the body*, viz. that of Grotius, *in corpore, hoc est, corpore translato; in anima, hoc est, in animo sine ulla corporis motione.* But this seems to me a harsh interpretation; as a rapture of the body into the third or highest, the angelic heaven, seems scarce consistent with the nature of an earthly body, not yet changed or glorified. The other opinion is attended with no such difficulty, viz. that St. Paul's doubt was, whether his soul still remained in his body, or was actually separated from it for the time, and carried to paradise or heaven. The separate existence of the soul is a very easy point of faith. And whether the soul in vision is separated from the body or not, it is, perhaps, affected in the same manner as separate souls are with the impressions of things.

same description of an admission to the divine presence and counsels, expressed in the same strong terms of seeing, hearing and the like.

*It came to pass* (says the prophet Ezekiel in the beginning of his prophecy) *as I was by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened* (the usual presignification of a celestial vision, says Grotius) *And I saw the visions of God.\**

THE question put by Jeremiah to the false prophets of his days (*who deceived the people and made them vain, speaking a vision out of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord.* For thus it is he describes them) is a very remarkable one, and may deserve our particular attention. Ch. xxiii. 18. *For who hath stood in the council of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word?*

*Me yamad be-sod Jehovah, &c. Who hath stood in the secret council or assembly of Jehovah, and hath seen and heard his word?* Which of you, that is, hath been rapt in vision, and admitted as a stander-by, and hearer in that great assembly where God's consultations are held, and hath brought a message to his people from thence? No, you go presumptuously with messages of your own heads, as it follows ver. 21. *I have not sent these prophets, yet they run: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my council, (again the same expression) and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.*

THE meaning of these passages seems clear. The scripture speaks of God after the manner of men. For their is a necessity of condescending to our capacities, and of suiting the revelation to our apprehensions, and to the ideas we are furnished with.

As kings therefore transact their most important affairs in a solemn council or assembly, so God is pleased to represent himself as having his council like-

\* Ezek. i. 1.



wife, and as passing the decrees of his providence in an assembly of his holy angels.

THE prophet, to whom God is pleased to reveal his will, is admitted in vision to this solemn consultation, as a stander-by, and hearer of what is there decreed and resolved on. *yamad be-sod Jehovab*—*He stands in the council or assembly of Jehovab*, as a waiter or servant, \* ready to carry his messages to his people. *Ve-jere ve-jish-may eth debaro*. *He sees and hears his word*. Sees what is there transacted, and hears the decree that is passed, and the message he is to carry. And hence this reproof of Jeremiah to the false prophets, who had never stood in the council of the Lord, and yet were so presumptuous as to carry messages as from him.

If there needed any further comment upon this passage, the vision of *Micaiah* (1 Kings xxii.) will set it in the strongest light. For we have there one of those grand consultations described, with the whole proceedings and result of it; and the prophet himself as admitted in vision to partake of it, and to carry from thence God's high behests.

VER. 19.—22. *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left.*

*And the Lord said, who shalt persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another on that manner.*

*And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said I will persuade him.*

*And the Lord said unto him, wherewith? And he said I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said thou shalt persuade him and prevail also: Go forth and do so.*

\* This is so truly the force of the Hebrew word *yamad*, that *yomed lipné melec*, one that stands before the king, is properly the king's minister. And when Elisha says, (2 Kings iii. 14.) *As the Lord lieth before whom I stand*, he means, *whose minister I am*. And so the Chaldee paraphrast renders it, *ante quem ministro*.

WHETHER there was any such real consultation as is here represented to the prophet, is not necessary for us to enquire. Our best divines think not. The most celebrated of our English commentators calls it "a parabolical speech;" and says, "It is not to be thought, that there was any such consultation before the divine majesty: but these representations are contrived to bring down invisible things to the meanest capacities of men."\*

BUT be this speech parabolical, or whatever you will please to call it, the drift and substance of it (we may be sure) was a divine infallible truth: viz. That Ahab's prophets prophesied lyes; and this by the instigation of that wicked spirit, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lyes. And moreover, as to the representation here given in all its circumstances, it was stamped upon the prophet's mind in vision, and it was God who directed him to use it; as appears plainly from the solemn preface with which the introduces it, *Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord.*

I CHOSE to quote this vision of Micaiah at large, because of the agreement which it has with the passage of Job, which gave occasion to our present enquiry—  
Ch. i. 6.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

And so, Ch. ii. Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

And the Lord said unto Satan, from whence comest thou? And so on.

HERE we see is the same grand assembly held in the case of Job, as was before in that of Ahab. The same host of heaven, called here the sons of God presenting themselves before Jehovah; as, in the vision of Micaiah, they are said to stand on his right hand, and on his left. A wicked spirit appearing among

\* Bishop Patrick on the place.



them, here called Satan, or the adversary, and there a lying spirit; bent on mischief both, and ready to do all the hurt that they were able, as far as God would give them leave; but nevertheless both under the controul of his power, and suffered to go thus far and no farther, as might best serve the wise ends of his justice and his providence.

THE imagery, in short, is just the same. *Similis diatupwotıs*, as the learned Grotius observes. And the only difference is in the manner of the relation: that Micaiah as a prophet, and in the actual exercise of his prophetic office, delivers it, as he received it, that is, as in vision. *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, &c.* The other, as an historian, interweaves it with the history; and tells us in the same plain narrative style, *There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord*, as he does, *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.* The things (in a word) delivered to us by these two sacred writers are in substance the same; equally high, and above the reach of mere human sight and knowledge; but the manner of delivering them is different; by each, as suited best their several purpose; and both, no doubt, by inspiration and direction of almighty God.

I AM not fond of drawing parallels betwixt the Sacred and Heathen writers: For *What is the chaff to the wheat?* \* said he who is infallible.

NEVERTHELESS I cannot forbear observing upon this occasion, that the oldest Heathen poet, which is now extant, sets before his reader the consultations of his deities in the same narrative way: and so, I make no doubt, did others long before him. And though religion was become sadly depraved in Homer's time, his system of divinity grossly erroneous, and his gods fictitious; and consequently his inspiration could be no other than that of his own fiery genius: yet I doubt not but the method he makes use of to let us know that every thing is

\* Jerem. xxiii. 28.

subject to an over-ruling providence; viz. by describing those grand consultations of the celestials among themselves, which were previous to the events; was a method practised long before him, and derived down from the truly inspired.

It is, in short, as I said, the prophetic style: a grand and noble way of representing things, as to the manner of doing them; which, whether done exactly in the same manner, concerns not us to know; but which are really done. And God would have them described as done in this manner, to make the more lively, and more lasting impression on us.

At the same time it must not be forgotten, that the representations of this kind are founded in a well-known and established truth; I mean, the doctrine of angels good and bad, the ministers of providence. A point revealed, no doubt, from the beginning; and without a previous knowledge whereof the visions of the prophets could be scarce intelligible. There presentation made to Jacob in a dream, (Gen. xxviii.) of the *ladder which reached from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon it*, continually employed, that is, in receiving and executing the decrees and orders of the great creator, who from the top of all surveys and directs every thing: as it is a just and lively picture of the divine providence and the administration of it, may serve as an excellent comment to the other passages of scripture which we have been now considering. For they who by the prophet Jeremiah are called *sed Jehovah*, the council or assembly of Jehovah; in Micaiah's vision, the host of heaven; in the book of Job, the sons of God; are here called by a name more proper and explicit than either, *Malacé Elobim*, the angels of God, the acknowledged ministers of his providence.

I HAVE dwelt the longer (I confess) on this deduction, for the sake of an inference or two, which I had in view, relating to the writer of the book of Job.



As first, from his using the prophetic style, we have reason to conclude he must have been a prophet indeed, that is, an inspired person: for otherwise, a man of that sense and piety, which the book shews him to be; one who appears to have had very just and noble sentiments of God and religion, would never presume (we may suppose) to counterfeit the prophetic style, and usurp a privilege or character which did not belong to him. This would have been a crime somewhat like that of the false prophets thus reproved by Jeremiah, *Who (which of you) hath stood in the council of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his words? No, you go with messages of your own heads; I have not sent them, yet they run, &c.*

I AM aware, that they who form a judgment from the practice of our modern poets, will think there is little or nothing in this argument: for who is there that scruples to invent whatever he apprehends to be necessary to the machinery (as he calls it) of his poem? But I must take leave to think that none presumed to write in this strain among the ancients, but who either really were, or who pretended to be, inspired. A false pretence to inspiration is what cannot be supposed of any sincere worshipper of the true God; much less a person of distinguished piety; such as the writer of the book of Job; and therefore his pretensions must be real.

HERE then is a considerable point gained: that the very nature of the composition affords us no contemptible argument of the inspiration of the writer.

NEXT I would infer the probability that Job himself was the writer of his own story. Of whose inspiration we have (I think) very clear evidence in this book: I mean, from those remarkable words of his to God, Ch. xlii. 5. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee.*

It is plain that here is some privilege intended he never had enjoyed before, and which he calls a sight

fight of God. He had heard of him by the bearing of the ear, or the tradition delivered down from his forefathers: but he had now a clear and sensible perception of his being and divine perfections: some light thrown in upon the mind, which carried its own evidence with it, and of which perhaps we can form no notion, because we never felt it; but which to him had all the certainty and clearness even of sight itself. In short, some manifestation of the Deity made to him in vision, such as the prophets had, and from whence they derived their very name of seers.

FOR I apprehend, that there is no necessity of supposing that supernatural appearance and speech of the Deity with which the poem concludes, to have been any thing more than a prophetic vision. \* The abrupt manner of introducing it, seems as if it were designed on purpose to check our curiosity, and prohibit too bold an enquiry into this matter. † *Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said.* No whirlwind described, or so much as mentioned before; and only here expressed in a single word, which the Chaldee paraphrast made no scruple to turn into a metaphor. ‡ And it must be owned, that Job expresses that confusion into which his calamities had thrown him, by the same word *Seyarab*, only written with a different s, Chap. ix. 17. *He breaketh me with a tempest, &c.*

\* If the opinion of Maimonides and the Jewish Rabbins be of any weight, he tells us, that it was a received rule with their wise men, that all the revelations made to the prophets, (except Moses) however they are expressed or described, are to be understood as made to them in a dream or vision. And he quotes the words of God himself, as full to this purpose, Num. xii. 6. *Hear now my words, If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, &c.* See Maim. More Nov. P. 2. Ch. 41.

P. 307.

† Ch. xxxviii. 1.

‡ *Et respondit Dominus ad Job, ענין עליון, de turbine doloris.* Targum in loc.



HOWEVER, we may grant a real whirlwind or cloud, without any necessity of admitting the long speech that follows to have been actually made from thence. For supposing Job and his companions, by this extraordinary appearance to have been thrown into a trance, the whole substance of the speech might be impressed upon his mind in vision, which he might afterward put into the form and words wherein we now have it. His three friends might in the same way be made sensible of their errors, and be induced to offer a sacrifice of expiation by the hand of Job.

BUT however we explain the passage, this (I think) is evident, that here is one of those extraordinary manifestations of the Deity vouchsafed to Job, by which the prophets and inspired persons were distinguished; such as he himself had never before had the experience of, and which therefore we have reason to regard as a sort of unction or consecration of him to the prophetic office: and was followed probably by other visions or revelations, which might discover to him the whole secret of the divine dispensations towards him. And how reasonable was this, if he was himself to be the writer of his own story, and to leave it as an instruction for the church of God in all succeeding ages!

THERE is, methinks, a pleasure in observing the accomplishment of that passionate wish of his, Ch. xix. 23. and that in a higher and a better sense, than he himself could possibly have hoped for when he made it. *Oh that my words were now written! that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!*

HAD they been graven on a rock, they might have remained some few ages: but in this divine poem they will live for ever. And how could this good man better employ the remainder of that life, which God had so miraculously restored and lengthened out to him, than in the composing such a noble work as this! A thing so agreeable to his own most ardent wishes; and for which none could be so well qualified as he. Let us not therefore rob him of the honour of it; at least, till

till we can find some other person who may have a juster title to it.

IF we allow Job himself to have been the writer of the book, there will be evidently two advantages hereby gained to it. As first, that all objections to the historical truth of it vanish at once.

NONE could tell his own story so well as Job; nor have we any reason to question his veracity. The dialogue too will then appear to have been the substance of a real conversation, as no dialogue was ever more natural. If the story be told us in verse, or in the prophetic style and language; as the first of these was a practice of the highest antiquity, the other adds the most sacred and unquestionable authority to it: so that neither truth nor ornament is here wanting any more than the dignity of the subject, to render this a book of inestimable value.

THE other advantage I intended is this: that if Job himself were the writer of the book; then every point of history, and every doctrine of religion here treated of, which coincide with those delivered in the books of Moses, are an additional proof or confirmation of these latter; as being evidently derived from some other source, not borrowed from the Pentateuch.

FOR it is generally allowed that Job lived before Moses; or if contemporary with him, yet at too great distance to receive any benefit or instruction from him or his books. Whatever knowledge he had therefore of the creation of the world, the fall of man, the universal deluge, or any other points of ancient history, must have been conveyed down to him by a different canal. And I think the different manner in which these points are treated in the book of Job, very evidently shews it.



## S E C T. XI.

**H**OW fond soever we may be to find Job the writer of this book, the objections urged by learned men against it, must not be passed over— One of these (I mean the supposed allusions to the Jewish law or history, to be found in the book of Job) has been already examined at large. There are but three others (I think) of any moment; and they shall be considered in this section.

THE first is taken from Job's being called, (Ch. i. 4.) *The greatest of all the men of the east.* The second, from the mention of his death at the conclusion. The last is drawn from the style and language of the book.

THE first is an objection of the learned Grotius, who is followed by Le Clerc and others; that Job's being here called *the greatest of all the men of the east*, is an argument that the book must have been written by some Israelite, or inhabitant of the land of Canaan; Job's country lying eastward from thence, and it being usual with the Hebrews to call Arabia the east.

BUT if it was usual with any other people, beside the Hebrews, to call Arabia the east; then this can be no argument that the writer of the book was an Hebrew. And here therefore I must borrow a conjecture from the learned Mr. Mede, viz. "That the Israelites learned this language while they sojourned amongst the Egyptians:" which appears probable from this circumstance, that Arabia lay due east from Egypt, but not from Canaan\*.

MOREOVER it was hither chiefly that the commerce of the eastern countries flowed. The spices of Arabia in particular were carried in great quantities to Egypt; and that as anciently as Jacob's days, as we learn from Gen. xxxvii. 25. Now an intercourse of commerce

\* Mr. Mede's words are— *Ubi observandum, Arabes in sacris literis peculiariter filios orientis nominari, ut & Arabiam ipsam Kedem seu Orientem, utique respectu Egypti, ubi Israelitæ sic loqui didicerant.* See his works, Fol. pa. 467.

carried on from Arabia to Egypt, that is, from east to west, might make it as customary for the Arabians to call themselves, with respect to these western parts, the east; as for the Egyptians or any other people, to call Arabia so. And then what becomes of this argument.

NAY, I think, we have a plain example of it, (Matt. ii. 2.) where the wise men or Magi, (supposed by Grotius himself to be inhabitants of Arabia) call their own country the east. *Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, &c.* Which cannot be meant of the place or site of the star, (for that probably stood west from them) but of the country from whence they came. And so says the same great man, *Terra unde venerant, non celi regio, hac voce denotatur.* Grot. in Matt. ii. 1.

If an Arabian therefore in our Saviour's time might call his country the east; why not an Arabian likewise in Job's time? And thus much for the first objection.

THE second is taken from the mention of Job's death at the conclusion of the book.

BUT this is easily accounted for in the same way as the death of Moses, told us at the conclusion of the book of Deuteronomy: which, I believe, scarce any learned man at present thinks (with Josephus\*) to have been written by Moses himself in the spirit of prophecy; but to be an addition by some other hand, probably that of the prophet Samuel, (as our best divines think) who might fill up the history in this manner from authentic records left by Joshua and others. †

If

\* *Jos. Antig.* L. 4. C. 48. p. 176. Ed. Hudson.

† That it was usual with the prophets to write the history of their own times, is evident from a remarkable passage at the end of the first book of Chronicles; where the author refers for a larger and more particular account of things to "the book of Samuel the seer, and the book of Nathan the prophet, and the book of Gad *bachozeh*," another name for a seer. These three prophets (it seems) were all concerned in recording the acts of David, which Samuel begun, and the other two finished. So 2 Chron. ix. 29. Solomon's history is said to be recorded by Nathan Ahijah and Iddo, prophets or seers. And what is remarkable,



If this small addition to the book of Deuteronomy then be no objection, but that Moses has been all along acknowledged the writer of that book; no more should a small addition to the book of Job deprive him of that title, to which he has so just a claim.

THIS is certain, that if we suppose the five or six last verses to have been added by some other hand, at a distance of time, when the book was first received (perhaps) into the collection of the Hebrew scriptures; it will help us to account for one circumstance, which the commentators have made a sort of problem of, *viz.* Why the names of Job's Daughters are mentioned at the conclusion of the book, and not those of his sons. The most natural solution whereof seems to be this: that the sacred writer, whoever he was, that made those small additions, living at some distance from the age of Job, upon the best enquiry he could make, could only learn the names of the daughters, not those of the sons. And perhaps the preservation of the daughters names might be owing to that uncommon favour granted them by Job, his dividing to them a share in the inheritance.

THE story, as told by Job himself, might probably conclude at Ch. lii. 10. *Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.* Or it might be continued to verse 12. *So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job* (Heb. *etb Acherith*, the latter part of his life) *more than the beginning.*

THE words immediately following look very much like an addition by some other hand, *viz.* that *he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, &c.* For it is only putting what was told us verse 10. (*viz.* that *God gave him twice as much as he had before*) into its respective parcels and numbers.

able, with the history of their own kings, they joined that of the neighbouring nations with whom they were concerned; as appears from 1 Chron. xxix. 30. And as they wrote the history of their own times; so there is no doubt but they were likewise employed in preserving, digesting, and filling up the history of former times.

AND

AND so likewise the following additions evidently look like something picked up by a curious enquirer, at the distance of some ages; who, for the satisfaction of posterity, was resolved to annex, by way of appendix to this noble history, whatever he could learn with certainty of the family of Job: which amounts to these few heads; that he had seven sons and three daughters, as at the first; that the daughters in particular were celebrated for their beauty, and shared the inheritance with their brethren; their names *Jemima, Kezia, and Keren-happuch*: that Job, after this happy turn of his condition, *lived an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons sons, four generations; and then died old, and full of days, or satisfied with life.*

WE see then, that these little additions are no objection at all against Job's being the writer of the book; but are in reality a strong confirmation of the truth of the history.

AND this Mons. Le Clerc himself seems to have been aware of—— “These names of the daughters” (says he) have been produced by some as a certain “argument of the truth of the history.” But then he adds, by way of objection, “but who can tell how far the Orientalists were wont to adorn their parables? In the Gospel-parable, there is the name of Lazarus, and yet it is accounted a parable nevertheless.” *Le Clerc Comment on Job, Ch. xlii. 14.*

“WHO can tell (says he) how far the Orientalists were wont to adorn their parables?” But we may ask, What ornament could it be to set down three hard names, which might have been omitted without the least damage to the parable, and after the parable (if it were such) was at an end? In histories indeed, facts and names are inserted, though never so dry, because truth is strictly followed: but in parables it is otherwise. A name may be inserted (as that of Lazarus) to help the memory, and to fix the story better; but here is no such reason for telling us the names

of



of Job's daughters; nor does it add the least grace or ornament to the parable.

THE most probable account of the matter therefore seems to be, that which I have mentioned, *viz.* that the sacred writer, whoever he was (whether Samuel or any other) that made this small addition to the book of Job, lived early enough, and near enough to the time of Job, to know this particular circumstance of his history, and so has inserted it. If he could have learned the sons names too, I make no doubt but he would have inserted these likewise: but from his not doing it, we may probably conclude, that he was ignorant of them. And this without the least diminution to his authority as an inspired writer: for there is no question but the writers or collectors of the sacred history, though under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, yet took the substance of what they relate from the authentick records or traditions of those that had gone before them. Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that transactions of which no memorial was preserved, were revealed to them by immediate inspiration. It is enough (sure) to believe that God made his prophets infallible, not that he made them omniscient.

BUT let this suffice in answer to the second objection.

THE third and last that remains to be considered, has a much more formidable appearance, and is drawn from the style of the book: which, in the opinion of some learned men, affords a clear proof of its being of a much later date than that which we assign to it.

Le Clerc supposes, that the book was written “after the Jews were carried to Babylon; and urges, as a proof of it, the frequent Chaldaisms to be found in it.

Codurcus tells us, that “there are in the book of Job “some passages taken from the Psalms, Proverbs, “and Ecclesiastes; not a few words unknown to the “Hebrew tongue till the times of David, Solomon, “and the later prophets. But above all, that there “are

“are more than an hundred words that occur not  
 “elsewhere, partly Syriac, partly Arabic, whose mean-  
 “ing must be sought from the various targums and  
 “commentaries of the Rabbins, and which being not  
 “to be found in the other books of Scripture, is a  
 “most certain sign that he who composed this book  
 “must be reckoned amongst the later writers, viz.  
 “such as lived at a time when many words, borrow-  
 “ed from the idiom of the neighbouring nations, were  
 “admitted into the Hebrew”——After which, he  
 gives two conjectures; one, that “the writer of the  
 “book might possibly be some Idumæan,” (and he  
 supposes Job’s country to be Idumæa) the other, “that  
 “it might be the prophet Isaiah”——And this last  
 conjecture seems to please him best, “*Quamquam nos  
 non parva suspicio tenet, ab Esaia fluxisse hoc scriptum, &c.*  
 Codurc. in Job. C. i.

THE opinion of the learned Grotius must not be  
 omitted, which he delivers with his usual modesty and  
 brevity.

THAT, “the book of Job contains a true history,  
 “(as appears from Ezek. xiv. 14. Jam. v. 11.) but  
 “treated in a poetical manner. That the thing hap-  
 “pened (as he conjectures) while the Hebrews wan-  
 “dered in the desert: that there is no mention in the  
 “book of any law, but such as was traditional, nor  
 “any points of history there touched upon, but such  
 “as were of the more ancient times: and that the  
 “length of (Job’s) life extended to two hundred years;  
 “agrees also with the same times: that the country,  
 “where it happened, was Arabia; as appears not on-  
 “ly from the names of places, Uz, Teman, Suhab;  
 “but from the many Arabic words here used: that  
 “the writer is unknown; but whoever he was, it is  
 “probable that he lived before Ezekiel’s time, from  
 “that passage in his prophecy where Job is men-  
 “tioned; but later than David and Solomon, from  
 “whose writings some sentences and ways of speaking  
 “seem to be transferred hither. There are also (says  
 “he) some forms of speech, not to be found but in  
 “Da-



“ Daniel, Ezra, and the Chaldee paraphrafts.” He adds his opinion, “ that it was written for the use of the Edomites transported to Babylon; to confirm them, by such an illustrious example, in the worship of the one God, and a life of holiness, and to teach them patience in adversity. And that it was written by some Hebrew, I collect from hence, (says he) because it was usual with the Hebrews to call Arabia the east; as I have shewn upon Matt. ii. 1.”

THIS last conjecture has been already obviated; and it has been shewn, that his calling Arabia the east is no argument that the writer was an Hebrew. But I admire, that this learned man, who allows the many Arabic words used in this poem, to be a good proof that the thing happened in Arabia, should not, at the same time, see that it was a much stronger proof that the writer was an Arabian.

As for the other exceptions, drawn from the style of the book; it were endless to examine them at large, but easy to oppose authority against authority, and one learned man's opinion against another; which in doubtful points, and merely conjectural, (as these for the most part are) will hold the scales *in equilibrio*.

THE learned Schultens, whatever his judgment may be in other matters, is allowed (I think) to be a great master of the languages; and he tells us, that “ the style of the book of Job has all the marks of the most venerable and remote antiquity.” And therefore he makes no scruple to ascribe the poetical, that is the dialogue part, to Job himself: the rest he supposes to be the work of some Hebrew collector\*. But

\* That a few of the last verses were added by some other hand, I have shewn to be highly probable. But why this learned man should suppose the same of any other part of the book, I am at a loss to think; since the dialogue without the history is so imperfect a thing, that it is absurd to suppose they were written separately. As to the character there given of Job and his uprightness, it is an objection scarce worth mentioning; since no judicious person can be offended at it, who considers that Job's whole defence through-

as for Le Clerc's Chaldaisms, such as the termination *in* for *im*, in the plural; he says, they are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the most ancient stamp †.

ALL the other learned men, who suppose the book to be written by Moses or Elihu, or some one near the time of Job, must of course be persuaded, that there is nothing in the style, but what is very consistent with this remote antiquity; and that what the others take for imitations of passages in the Psalms or Proverbs, Daniel or Ezra, are rather originals to these, and that these last are really the imitations.

THE Jewish doctors, or a great majority of them, believe that Moses was the writer of this book. And they found their belief upon a passage in the Talmud; which shews the opinion to have been very ancient, as well as common among them. These therefore could have no notion of any mixture of more modern languages, or imitations of any later books to be found in the book of Job.

It is remarkable, that there is one particular wherein all sides are agreed; and that is, that the book of Job is the most difficult of all the books of Scripture. And indeed there are many words and phrases in it, which the learned have been puzzled to explain.

Now this to me seems to go a great way towards deciding the question about the antiquity of the book. For what is it that should make it so difficult, but its being written in a language, some words whereof are

out the dialogue is founded hereupon; and moreover, it is a character he might well bestow upon himself, for it is the same which God has given him.

They, who think that Job ought not to bestow upon himself the character of a *perfect and upright man, that feared God and eschewed evil*, would do well to consider what Hezekiah says of himself, in his prayer to God, 2 Kings xx. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, &c.* with which nevertheless God was so far from being offended, that he graciously admits his plea, and adds fifteen years to his life.

† Nullus inter sacros codices tam genuinum remotissimæ antiquitatis præfert characterem. Chaldaismi illi, quos nonnulli captant ex terminationibus Plur. in in pro im etiam Hebraicæ & Arabicæ sunt ditionis atque vetustissimæ Moneta. Dr. Grey's Job, p. 12. of the preface.

grown



grown so obsolete, that their true meaning is quite lost, or very hard to be recovered.

HAD Ezra been the author of this book, it can scarce be thought, but that like the other books ascribed to him, (allowing only for the difference of poetry and prose) it would have been very easy and intelligible. The Hebrew must have been the same as was to be found in the other books of Scripture; and if any mixture of the Chaldee, it must have been such as was then and long after spoken: so that interpreters could scarce have been at a loss for the meaning of any word used throughout the book. And the same may be said, if we suppose any other to have written the book about the time of Ezra or the Babylonish captivity. If we come lower down, it is plain the language of it must have been still more and more intelligible.

WHAT Codurcus says, of the "targums and commentaries of the Rabbins clearing up the meaning of some passages of Job," is very idle. The targums or Chaldee Paraphrases indeed, as they are a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, give light to all of them. But yet there are many places in the book of Job, too difficult for these translators: which shews it to be of a much older date than any language then in being, or which they were acquainted with, could reach.

AND as for the commentaries of the Rabbins, we may guess how well qualified these men were for interpreters, from a story told us by St. Jerome; who himself hired one of the most famous of them at a great price\*, to instruct him particularly in this book

\* *Memini me ob intelligentiam hujus voluminis Lyddæum quendam præceptorem, qui apud Hebræos primus haberi putabatur, non parvis redemisse nummis, cujus doctrinâ an aliquid profecerim nescio: hoc unum scio non potuisse me interpretari, nisi quod antè intellexeram.*

*Cela nous fait connoître manifestement, (says P. Simon, from whom I take this, Critiq. de Prolegom. de Dupin. p. 516. Tom. 3.) qu'en tems de St. Jerome, les Rabbins, même les plus doctes, ignoroient la véritable signification de plusieurs mots étrangers qui sont dans le Livre de Job, & ils leur sont encore présentement inconnus.*

of Job, which he found to be very obscure: and after all the instructions of his Jewish master, he tells us, that he understood just as much of the book as he did before, and no more.

THIS difficulty of the book of Job made one of the Jewish doctors † vary a little from the common opinion of his brethren, and suppose it a translation made by Moses from some other language; as all translations (he says,) are a little obscure.

DUPIN says, “the style of the book of Job is figurative, poetical, and obscure; very different from that of the Pentateuch”; and therefore he will not allow Moses to have been the author of it: besides that, “we find there (he says,) a quantity of Arabic and Syriac words.”

As for this last particular, it must be owned, that Monsr. Huet accounts for it very ingeniously, by supposing the book to have been written by Moses in his state of exile in the land of Midian, where he resided forty years; long enough (it is certain) to catch a foreign dialect.

BUT then, as father ‡ Simon observes, he must have unlearned that dialect again, when he wrote the Pentateuch, which that father will not allow to be probable. *C'est supposer une chose (says he) qu'on ne prouve point, & qu'on ne sauroit meme prouver.*

NOT to puzzle ourselves amidst this variety of opinions; two things we find the learned, for the most part are agreed in, viz. that there are great difficulties in the book of Job, and that the style has some mixture of the Arabic. And this last is so certain, that they who have made the happiest conjectures about these difficult passages, have been more beholden to the Arabic than Chaldee for the light they have received towards it\*. So that after all this contention  
I about

† viz. Abraham ben Ezra.

‡ P. Sim. Crit. des Prolegom. de Dupin, Lib. 5. pa. 514.

\* There are three words used, Job ix. 9. and again Job xxxviii. 31, 32. to denote certain stars or constellations, which the commentators scarce know what to make of, viz. *Yash, cesh, and cimab.*



about the style, we have here probably the very language spoken in Arabia in the days of Job. And this is the more probable, if the sons of Abraham by Cheturah (from whom Job himself is supposed to be descended) were those who peopled this part of the world; for then no doubt but they carried Abraham's language with them.

SUPPOSING then that the Arabians spoke originally the same language with the Hebrews, and the present Arabic be the same language, with such variations only as a long tract of time has introduced; it is natural to think, that some Hebrew words may be met with in that language, which are not in the Hebrew books of Scripture: and that if there be any Hebrew book of the highest antiquity, with some obsolete words in it not to be found in the other books of Scripture, and especially if the writer of the book were an Arabian; it is natural to think, that the meaning of these words may be still preserved in, and can be only fetched from the Arabic language. And this seems to be the fact with respect to the book of Job.

LASTLY, As to Grotius's observation, that there are some phrases in the book of Job not to be found but in Daniel, Ezra, and the Chaldee paraphrasts; had he pointed out the particular passages or phrases, a more particular answer might be given to it. Sure I am, for I have looked over all his notes, that he has not produced a single instance of any word used in the book of Job, that is to be found in the Chaldee paraphrasts, and them alone: and therefore these might have been left entirely out of the question. And as for Daniel and Ezra, he himself supposes the book

It is remarkable of the first of these, that Bochart derives it from the Arabic word *mayash feretrum*, per *Sphæresin*, by cutting off the *n*. Schultens derives it from the Arabic *yash circuvit*, *gyravit*, to turn round as in a circle, and renders it *nocturnum Circitorem*, the nightly Circulator; both intending the same constellation, viz. the Bear. And as its winding round the polestar is so remarkable, and must have hit the observation of men in the earliest ages; Schultens's conjecture about the derivation of the word appears extremely natural and probable.

of Job to have been extant before the writings of either of these; and therefore the author could not possibly borrow from them. That they might from him, seems not at all unlikely; since the book of Job was, probably, in high repute at this time; as we are sure Job himself was, from that remarkable passage of Ezekiel, from whence Grotius himself infers the book to have been then extant. It is true, he does not suppose it to have been extant long before Ezekiel's time, nor would the hypothesis he was fond of suffer him. It was necessary to his purpose to reduce it to as low a date as he could; and this he endeavours therefore, by arguments drawn from some passages of the book: which because they are but few, and coming from so great a man, I shall consider distinctly, and in the order they occurred to me, in the following section.

## S E C T. XII.

ONE cannot but wonder, that the learned Grotius, who has granted so many things that favour the antiquity of the book of Job, should nevertheless rest at last in an opinion, the most improbable of all that have been advanced (perhaps) till within these few years, and ground it upon arguments so weak and insufficient.

He allows the "truth of the history, though told in a poetical manner;" fixes the time when, and place where the thing happened, viz. "in Arabia, and while the Israelites wandered in the desert." Acknowledges that there is "no mention in this book of any law but such as was traditional; nor of any point of history, besides those of the more ancient times," viz. before the giving of the Mosaic law: and that "the length of Job's life extended to two hundred years, agrees also with those times:" and moreover that "though the writer is unknown, it appears credible from a passage in Ezekiel, that he lived before the time of that prophet." All this is manifestly on our side.



BUT then he adds, "But later than David and Solomon, from whose books some sentences and ways of speaking seem to be transfer'd hither." (Or why not from the book of Job to those of David and Solomon? The probability at least is equal, and therefore the argument precarious.) "There are also (says he) some forms of speech not to be met with but in Daniel, Ezra, and the Chaldee paraphrasts." (But if the book were written before Ezekiel's time, it is impossible the author could borrow from any of these.) Then follows his conjecture, that it was "written for the use of the posterity of Esau," (that is, the Edomites) "transported to Babylon; and yet that the writer was some Hebrew."

BUT here seem to be two inconsistencies. First, that it should be written for the use of the Edomites carried captive to Babylon, and yet written before Ezekiel's time, who lived and prophesied before the time of their captivity\*. Was it written then in the spirit of prophecy, and with a foresight of what would happen? Or was there any other transportation of the Edomites before this, to which the book may have a reference? If so, yet still the Edomites and Jews were never such good friends and neighbours, as to make us think that a Jew would write a book purely for their use and consolation in their captivity. The Edomites, who triumphed in the destruction of Jerusalem, and said, † *Down with it, down with it, even to the ground.* The prophets, we are sure, more than one of them, regard this people as the declared ene-

\* Ezekiel's prophecy, Ch. xiv. was delivered about four years before the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the eleventh of Zedekiah. And the Edomites, together with their neighbours the Moabites, Zidonians, &c. are supposed to have been over-run by the army of the Chaldeans, about four years after the destruction of Jerusalem, viz. during the siege of Tyre. See *Prid. Conn. Part 1. B. 2. p. 90. Octavo.* It is plain from several places of Scripture, but particularly from Obadiah, ver. 10, to the 17th, that the Edomites sided with the Chaldeans, and assisted them in the destruction of Jerusalem. And therefore their own calamities and captivity could not happen till some time after this.

† Psalm cxxxvii.

mies of the Jewish nation; and, instead of consoling them, are directed to denounce God's judgments against them. Had the author of the book of Job a contrary commission?

BUT so much for his conjecture about the author and design of the book. Let us now proceed to the passages he has produced, with a view to lessen its antiquity.

ON Ch. vi. 2. where Job says, *O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together.* He observes that the word *havvath*, "*calamity*, is neither to be found in the law nor the elder prophets," (meaning the historical books of Scripture) "and therefore may be placed among the notes or evidences of the time wherein this book was written." \*

BUT the word occurs in Micah, in Isaiah, in more than one of the psalms ascribed to David, and in Solomon's proverbs, (Ch. xix. 13.) where the meaning of it too is fixed beyond exception, *Havvath le-abiv ben cessil, a foolish son is a calamity to his father.* And now where is the wonder, since the book of Job is a poem, that there should be some words in it not to be found but in the other poetical books of Scripture, or in the later prophets, (as they are called) which are a sort of poetical books likewise?

UPON Job xvi. 22. *When a few years are come,* Heb. *jesthajuz*; he observes that "the word here translated *come*, is a || Chaldee word, frequent in Daniel and Ezra."

BUT the same word is used Psalm lxviii. 32. entitled, A Psalm of David; as also Proverbs i. 27. still therefore the answer may be given as before, that it is sufficient that we have the authority of the oldest poetical books for the use of this word.

\* Calamities, Heb. *חור* *qua* Vox neque in Lege existat, neque in vetustioribus Prophetis; ideoque potest accedere ad Indicia temporis quo scriptus hic Liber.

|| Vox *חור* venient, est Chaldaica, frequens apud Danielem et Esdram.



It is likewise used Micah iv. 8. And by the prophet Isaiah several times. And what is particularly remarkable to our purpose, it occurs in this prophet no less than three times within the compass of three verses, (*viz.* Isaiah xxi. 12—14.) where he is delivering a prophecy against the Idumeans and Arabians—A plain intimation, that the word was used in these countries; and therefore stands as fair to be an old Arabic, as Chaldee word.

UPON Job xix. 7. *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard, &c.* “This, (says Grotius) and what follows, plainly agrees with the Lamentations of “Jeremiah, Ch. iii. 8, 9. \*

BUT since there is so great an affinity in the subject of these two books, can any one think it strange, that there should be an agreement likewise in the thoughts and expression in some particular passages, even tho’ the writers had never seen the books of each other?

BUT there is reason to believe that Jeremiah was not unacquainted with the book of Job, and that he has imitated him in more places than one.

THERE is a fine passage in the speech of Job, (Ch. vi. 19.) where having compared his friends to those deceitful brooks, which in a rainy season overflow their banks, but in a dry and sultry time, when they are most wanted, fail of a sudden, and afford no waters; he adds this beautiful circumstance, that the thirsty travellers turn thither for refreshment, but go away again confounded and ashamed. *The troops of Tema looked; the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.* There is not a more apt simile in Homer or Milton; nor one more finely wrought up into a picture.

CAN we be surprized then to see the same thought expressed, (I was going to say borrowed) Jerem. xiv. 2, 3. where upon occasion of a great drought and scarcity of water, the prophet breaks forth into the

\* *Hic locus, et qui sequitur, planè convenit cum Tbero Jeremia,* iii. 8, 9.

following strains: *Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish. The cry of Jerusalem is gone up. Their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters; they came to the pits, and found no water, they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed, and confounded, and covered their heads*

To give one instance more—Elihu says, (Job xxxvii. 23.) that God is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not afflict. The expression here, we see, is absolute, and wants a little explanation. The prophet gives it us, and that a very just and beautiful one, by the addition of a word. Lament. iii. 33. *For God doth not afflict, mill-libbo*, from his heart, or willingly. He takes no pleasure in the doing of it. It is his work indeed, but his *strange work*, as another \* prophet elegantly terms it—

Who then, that compares these two passages, can doubt which is the text, (if I may call it so) and which the exposition; which the original, and which the imitation?

BUT to proceed with Grotius—The other proofs, which he produces, are still slighter, if possible, than those I have considered.

ON Job xx. the speech of Zophar, he says, *Multa in hujus verbis de psalmis desumpta*; that “there are many things in this speech taken from the Psalms.” As if it might not be said with as much Authority and probability, that the composers of the Psalms borrowed from the book of Job.

ON Ch. xxiv. 22. where the word *חַיִּין*, *chajin* occurs, with the termination plural *in* for *im*, after the Chaldee manner, he says, “It is the form used in Daniel and the Lamentations, and may be added to the conjectures about the time, when the book of Job was written.” †

HE allows then, that it is used in the Lamentations; and yet we know, that Jeremiah was not among those

\* Isai. xxviii. 21.

†—*qualem formam & in Threnis & in Daniele reperias. Potest id adjici ad conjecturas temporis quo scriptus hic liber.* Grot. in loc. that



that were carried captive to Babylon and Chaldea; so as to make us think he caught this *Idiom* there.

BUT why should he use it in the Lamentations only, not in the book of his prophecies? Was it that the former is in verse, the other not? If so, the same reason will hold good for the book of Job.

IT is well known, that the ancients in their poetry were extremely nice about the sound of words: and therefore, if the termination *in* or *im* was used indifferently in common speech in Job's time, we may suppose he would make no scruple to use the one or the other in his verse, as best suited with a musical ear: and this seems to be the fact.

IT is very remarkable, for example, that he has the word *millim* ten times in this poem, and *millin* (with the *n*) thirteen times. I trust to the concordance for the exact number. Now can any thing be more natural, than to think, that he chose either the one or the other, as he saw best, to avoid some harsh collision in the sound, or some way or other for the advantage of the metre? Do not the ancient Greek poets make the same use of their different dialects?

IF this Chaldee dialect then (as we may term it) was but just beginning to prevail in Job's time, or had only caught hold of a word or two, such as *millin*, *chajin*, or the like; but afterwards became the usual way of pronunciation over all those eastern parts; this, methinks, still favours the opinion of the antiquity of the book. So little is there in this grand argument (which nevertheless is the most plausible that has been offered, and the most frequently insisted on) to lessen the antiquity of the book of Job.

NOR do I see any thing more in Grotius, that can be supposed to affect it, unless it be that he has taken notice of a few words, and a very few, (scarce five or six, I think) which he would have to be Chaldee or Syriac words, or to derive their meaning from these languages. But had there been more of them, it could weigh but little in the present argument, since the languages were originally the same, and both these  
latter

latter (as the generality of learned men agree) derived from the Hebrew. At the same time it must not be forgotten, that there are many words in the book of Job, not to be found in the Chaldee, Syriac, or any other language, (at least not yet discovered) which is a much stronger proof of its antiquity.

To which I might add, that words, rarely to be met with elsewhere, are to be found in Job in their most primitive or simple forms. I cannot better explain myself than by a single instance.

GENES. XXIV. 17. Abraham's servant says to Rebecca, *בגממיני נא* *baggemini na*, &c. Give me to drink, (or make me to sup, \* the verb is in the Hiphil) *אני אבקש* *ani eבקש* I pray thee, a little water out of thy pitcher.—The word is found no where else in scripture, except Job xxxix. 24: and there in the more simple form, viz. in the conjugation Kal, or Pibel, (the Hebrew letters in both are the same) *בִּעְרָאשׁ וְעִרְגֶּז יִגְאָמֵנִי אֶרֶץ*, *He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage*—It is in the fine description of the horse.

We see here then, that the root is preserved only in the book of Job; and had it not been for this one passage, the word in Genesis would have been reckoned by the Lexicographers amongst the verbs whose root is unknown, or out of use.

I SAID that the word is no where else to be found; because though there is a word of very near affinity to it, Habak. i. 9. yet some derive it from another root, viz. *מגמת* *megammath*, from *גמ* *not גמ*. But whatever root the word may require, I make no doubt but the prophet borrowed the very expression from this place of Job—He is foretelling the rapid conquests of the Chaldeans, and the desolation that was coming upon the Jews in particular, from that † *bitter and hasty nation, terrible and dreadful*. He describes their † *horses swifter than the leopards, fiercer than the evening wolves*; and the horsemen

\* From the verb *גמל* comes *גמל* *juncus*, sic dictus quod aquam sorbeat, (Buxt.) Job. viii. 11. Exod. iii. 2. Isai. xxxv. 7.

† Hab. i. 6, 7. † Verse 8.

flying



flying as the eagle to her prey. And then drops this remarkable expression, *Megammath pene-hem kadimab*, the supping up of their faces (is as) the East wind. Their very looks, that is, are like a blasting wind, that threatens devastation where it goes, and seems ready to drink up and devour every thing. It follows, *And they shall gather the captivity as the sand* †.

I FREELY own, that I should not have known what to make of this passage of the prophet, if I had not read the other passage in the book of Job. But by comparing them together, there appears in both the same grand image, the same daringness of expression: and it is easy to see which was the original.

UPON the whole, I cannot but admire that Grotius, who was a poet himself, and must know therefore, that a poet, especially upon sublime subjects, (and none can be more sublime than those which are here treated) is under a necessity of ranging the whole world for his conceptions, and must therefore range the whole compass of language for expression, may often borrow from a neighbouring language to supply the defects of his own; should yet stumble at a few examples of this kind to be met with in the book of Job; when I could shew, that there are not wanting examples of the same kind even in the books of Moses ||. Words (I mean) which they call Syriac or Chaldee words, because common in those languages, or used there in a peculiar sense: Whereas

† The ravages of the Chaldæan army are compared to a blasting east-wind, Ezek. xvii. 10, and elsewhere.

|| For instance, Genes. xxx. 38. Jacob puts the rods *בְּרִיחִים* *ba-rebatim*, in *canalibus*, “in the gutters;” a word, say the Lexicons, derived from the Chaldee *rabat*, (רָבַח) *currere*. If they had said from the Syriac word, (which is the same, and carries the same sense) perhaps they had said better: for it is to be observed, that Jacob was now in Syria with Laban the Syrian, and therefore might naturally use a Syriac word. And it is remarkable that Elihu, from whose speech Grotius has produced most of his instances, was likewise a Syrian; as that learned man himself acquaints us. *Elibu—de cognatione Ram—id est, Syrus origine. Nam Buxus Nachoris Syri filius. Ram & Aram inter se commutantur.* So Grotius on Ch. xxxii. 2. *Aram* is the Hebrew name for Syria.

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the finding them in the Pentateuch is a demonstration that they were used, and that in the same sense, in the days of Moses : at least, it is a much better proof of it, than any thing now to be produced can possibly be to the contrary.

AND thus I have endeavoured to remove the objections drawn from the style in some particular places, which (I confess) is only giving a sort of negative proof of the antiquity of the book of Job. There is a positive proof however, arising from the style or language of the book in general, which may very justly be insisted on ; but this can properly be judged of by such alone as are well skilled in the Hebrew. And yet an English reader of good taste may give some guess from the translation ; will see enough at least to make him credit those who tell him, that there is in the original, both in the turn of thought and expression, something so nobly simple and sublime as is highly agreeable to what we believe or conceive, of the most ancient language, and most ancient times.

AND then for the subject-matter of the book, this too is such in all respects, as will stand the severest trial. So that upon the whole, we may venture to affirm, that there is no book in the world that carries in it stronger marks of its antiquity.

BUT as the famous testimony of Ezekiel to the person and character of Job, has been allowed by Grotius to be a good argument that the book was then extant ; it may not be amiss to see, how far this argument will carry us : which, though already touched elsewhere, shall therefore here be reconsidered.

Ezekiel xiv. 12, &c.

*The word of the Lord came again to me, saying,*

*Son of man, when the Land sinneth against me, by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, &c.*

*Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.*



THE same thing we find repeated, verse 16. And again verse 18. *Though these three men were in it; as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, &c.*

AND so a fourth time, at verse 20. where they are again mentioned by name.

*Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.*

THERE are several things observable to our purpose in this passage.

As first, that the character here given, or intimated of these three men, has the express and the repeated testimony of God himself: *As I live, saith the Lord God, &c.*

THEY are here instanced, as persons of distinguished piety, and high in favour with the Deity; so that if any thing could avert his judgments, their intercession would.

THEY must have been well known, and celebrated as such; in high repute with those to whom the prophecy is addressed; otherwise the instances would not have been so apt.

AND, lastly, whatever is here said or supposed of any one of these, must be understood of all alike; for they are joined together without the least distinction.

JOB therefore can be no fictitious character, but a real person; as truly as Noah and Daniel.

HE must have been a person of distinguished piety, so as to deserve a place in this triumvirate of worthies.

HE must be well known, and celebrated as such among the Jews, to whom this prophecy is addressed.

HE must have been therefore either of the seed of Israel, or of the patriarchal times; for otherwise he could never have been in such high repute for his piety amongst the Jews, who, (it is well known) had

no very favourable opinion of their Gentile neighbours.

If he was of the patriarchal times, (for an Israelite he could not be) he must have lived at near about the distance of a thousand years before Ezekiel's time. And this (I think) is the general opinion.

Now the question is, how Job should be so famous in Ezekiel's time, the reality of his person, and his eminent piety so acknowledged and celebrated, had there not been some authentic history of him then extant: I say, an authentic history. Which again supposes it to be written about the time that Job lived, or soon after; for otherwise the facts would be uncertain: and had any thing of this kind started up in Ezekiel's time, it must have passed for a novel, not a history: And as for a mere oral tradition of of him at the distance of a thousand years; this (sure) would have carried too much of the air of a fable to be made the ground of that high rank wherein he is here placed, with Noah and Daniel.

If then there must have been some history of Job at this time extant, and that such as was acknowledged for authentick; the next question is, Whether there be any reason that should induce us to believe it another history than that we now have. There is no record of any such history, that we know of; nor any ground to suppose it: and to suppose a thing without grounds, would be very wild and unreasonable. It was the mere force of truth therefore, and the necessity of the thing, that compelled the learned Grotius to acknowledge, that the book of Job must have been written before Ezekiel's time.

And if so, we may ask further, Whether a book so finely adapted to the circumstances of the Jews in their captivity, so fitted to amuse and comfort them in their distress, would not be eagerly read, and highly valued by them: and whether any other thing than this could have made the name of Job so famous, and his piety so celebrated among them, that God, in this appeal to their judgment, chose him as



a fit companion to be joined with two such renowned persons as Noah and Daniel: the one the common parent or restorer of the human race; the other high in favour with the Deity, a man greatly beloved (as it is said of him more than once) and so celebrated for his wisdom and prophetic spirit, that *art thou wiser than Daniel?* was become a proverb with them.

I would ask therefore, in the last place, Whether if the fame of Job and of his piety, in Ezekiel's time, rose from this history of him then generally known and read; the sanction here given by God to the character of Job, be not at the same time a sanction to the history, from whence alone that character could be known, and from whence the fame of his great piety sprung?

I THINK it must naturally have been taken as such, by all those that read the book.

SUPPOSE, for example, a thousand years hence, there should be no other record remaining of the man of Ross (as probably there will be none) but what is to be found in Mr. Pope's poems; Would not any one that should express his approbation of the generous and beneficent disposition of that good man, be understood to acknowledge the truth of the only record that was then extant of him; I hope there can be nothing exceptionable in this instance, though a familiar one, if it serves to instrate the matter before us: and the case seems to be exactly parallel.

By all accounts of the best judges, Job himself lived about a thousand years before Ezekiel's time: and therefore, had there been no written record of him, have been by that time as absolutely forgotten, as we must suppose the man of Ross will be a thousand years hence, unless his memory be preserved in Mr. Pope's poem. If Job therefore were so famous in Ezekiel's days, it must be owing to some book of him which was then extant. To this book which we now have, and no other; if this book, and no other was then extant. We may ask then, whether an allowance and approbation of the person and character of Job in Ezekiel's time, were not as much an allowance and approbation of the book of Job, as an allowance of the person

person and character of the man of Ross a thousand years hence, will be of that only record of him, which we suppose to be then remaining.

I CANNOT omit the note of Grotius upon this text of Ezekiel, which is short and remarkable.

HE shews the aptness of the instances here chosen from a particular circumstance in their respective stories. "Noah, (says he) *qui octo homines diluvio eripuit*, "whose piety saved his family, in all eight persons in the universal deluge"—Daniel "*qui Chaldaeos Magos*, " &c. who saved the lives of the Chaldæan Magi, or "wise men, devoted to destruction." And Job "*qui veniam impetravit*, &c. who obtained a pardon for "his three friends." The reason why the intercession even of these holy men could be of no avail in the present case, is intimated by him in the following words: *tantum mediocriter malis ob pios interdum par-citur, non ita contumaciter flagitiosis*; that those for whom the piety of Noah, Daniel and Job prevailed, were sinners in a less degree, but the Jews were greatly wicked and incorrigible.

WHAT I would infer from hence is this—That if Grotius's remark be just, and if an agreement, or similitude, in this particular incident of their stories, may be supposed one reason why God was pleased to join these three great names together; then here is a sanction given to this circumstance in the history of Job, his interceding for his friends: and this again refers us to some fault they had been guilty of; either their unjust suspicions of Job, or wrong representations of the divine providence: and this leads us to the dialogue: and so the book itself is authorised.

I SHALL conclude with observing, that it may well be looked on as a very providential thing, since there is nothing said of Job or his history in any other part of the Old Testament, that he should be here mentioned four several times, \* to prevent any possible

\* There is a parallel passage, Jerem. xv. 1. *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people.* But here these great names are mentioned once, and no more.

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surmise of a mistake, in the transcribing, as to the name or person intended; and that so clear a testimony should be transmitted to us of the divine authority of this admirable book, which the later Jews, though they dared not to exclude out of their canon, (which had been fixed of old by much wiser men) yet have greatly disparaged through mere ignorance, neither understanding the true design of the book, nor the worth of it.



**A Critical**



A

# Critical Dissertation

## ON THE

# BOOK of *Job*.

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### PART II. SECT. I.



Now proceed to the second part of my design, which is to enquire into the meaning of that celebrated text, (Job. xix. 25, 26.) *I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.*

THE learned writer, whose notion of the book of Job I have at large considered in the former part, says indeed, that  
 “ it is of little importance to his subject, whether  
 “ this famous passage be understood of a resurrection  
 “ from the dead, or only of temporal deliverance  
 “ from afflictions; having brought down the date of  
 “ the book so low”, as the time of Ezra. \*

\* D. L. V. 2. p. 543.



BUT if this low date of the book be (as I think I have shewn it to be) a mistake, then the question about the meaning of this text must be allowed to be of great importance to the subject of his book. And therefore let us consider his interpretation of it, and the arguments brought to support it.

“ I MAKE no scruple then (says he) to declare  
 “ for the opinion of those who understand the words  
 “ [I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall  
 “ stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though  
 “ after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh  
 “ shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine  
 “ eyes shall behold and not another,] to signify Job’s  
 “ confidence in a temporal deliverance from his af-  
 “ flictions; as all agree they may signify. And  
 “ therefore I shall the less insist upon a common  
 “ observation, that our translators being in the other  
 “ opinion, gave a force to their expression, which the  
 “ original will by no means support. My reasons  
 “ are these, 1. The understanding the words of a  
 “ resurrection is repugnant to the whole tenour of  
 “ the argument; and the other sense exactly corre-  
 “ spondent to it. 2. The end and design of the  
 “ composition, as explained above, absolutely re-  
 “ quires this latter sense, and disclaims the other.\*”

THE last of these reasons has been already obviated; and what force there is in the other shall be consider’d by and by.

BUT first, I would observe, that we can by no means allow the truth of the supposition, that “ all agree the words may signify” Job’s confidence in a temporal deliverance. It is true, that several eminent persons have thus explained them; but how hard put to it they have been to make them speak this sense, may be guessed from the paraphrase of one of the most judicious of them, I mean, bishop Patrick; who unhappily falls into this error, and whose words I shall quote immediately. Only premising, that the good

bishop thought himself obliged to apologize in his preface for the interpretation he had given to this passage; “to avoid, (as he says) the imputation of such novelty, as might be justly censured.”

His paraphrase then is this—

“*For I know that my redeemer liveth, &c.* For my hope, which was as dead as myself, (Ch. xvii. 13, 15. Ch. xix. 10.) begins to revive, because, though I seem for the present to be forsaken of God, yet I know that he can hereafter deliver me out of this miserable condition, since he lives for ever; and will, I doubt not, at last appear victorious over all the enemies which now oppress me.  
“*And though the worms, which have eaten my skin, should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched body; yet I feel my soul inspired with a comfortable belief, that before I die I shall see myself restored, by the mercy of God, to a happy estate*”—

I NEED go no further with it; for I suppose this is too much for any reasonable person to digest, viz. “That the worms, after they have eaten a man’s skin, should proceed to consume the rest of his body, and yet the man not die”—I hope the good bishop’s blunder will be an antidote against the bad effects of his novel interpretation, as he seems to have thought it would be reckoned.

If it be said, that the word proceed must be understood to soften the sentence here, and that it only means though they had begun to consume, &c. I might observe, that there is no proceed, or any thing like it in the original; and that the word, rendered destroy, signifies as absolute a destruction, as can be expressed by any word short of annihilation.

I COULD wish therefore that the learned author of the *D. L.* had given us an exact translation of the words, and shewn us how they may signify Job’s confidence in a temporal deliverance. But since he has not done it, let us attend to what he has done; and first consider his arguments for understanding the pas-



sage of a temporal deliverance ; and next, what he has offered against the other sense.

To shew the agreement of his sense of the words with the context and tenour of the dispute, he argues thus, p. 547.

“ JOB now provoked, past sufferance, at the in-  
 “ humanity and malice of his pretended friends, de-  
 “ livers himself up to despair, (Ch. xvii.) and seems  
 “ to contradict that part of his position which he  
 “ had held till now, (Ch. xiii. 15, 16.—Ch. xiv. 13.)  
 “ *that God would at length bring the good man out of*  
 “ *trouble.* For which being reproved by Bildad,  
 “ (*shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock*  
 “ *be removed out of his place, Ch. xviii. 4.)* — he recol-  
 “ lects himself in the nineteenth chapter, and comes  
 “ again to his former mind. He begins by com-  
 “ plaining of their cruel usage ; says, That if indeed  
 “ he were in an error, his case was so deplorable,  
 “ that they ought rather to treat him with indul-  
 “ gence : that this was no season to use severity ; begs  
 “ they would have pity on him ; and then retracts  
 “ what had fallen from him in the anguish and bit-  
 “ terness of his soul : and lastly, delivers this as his  
 “ fixed sentiments in which he was determined to per-  
 “ severe, (and in which he had indeed acquiesced,  
 “ till made impatient and desperate by the harshness  
 “ of their treatment) namely, *that God would at length*  
 “ *bring the good man out of trouble. I know that my*  
 “ *Redeemer liveth, &c.* which he introduces thus ;  
 “ *Oh that my words were now written ; Oh that*  
 “ *they were printed in a book, that they were graven*  
 “ *with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever,* (Ch.  
 “ xix. 23, 24.) As much as to say, what I uttered  
 “ through the distemperature of my passion, just be-  
 “ fore, I here retract, and desire may be forgotten,  
 “ and that this may be understood as my fixed and  
 “ and unshaken belief. And in this sentiment  
 “ it is remarkable, he henceforward perseveres ; ne-  
 “ ver relapsing again into the same extravagance of  
 “ passion. Which conduct agrees exactly with his  
 “ general

“ general thesis, that providence is not equally administered; for that the *good man is frequently unhappy,*  
 “ *and the wicked prosperous*; yet that at last God will  
 “ *bring the good man out of trouble, and punish the wicked.*

THIS is the argument at full length; and, except what is said of Job's delivering himself up to despair, we have here I think one continued error from the beginning to the end.

FOR as to that part of the position which the learned writer tells us Job had held till now (*viz.* till Ch. xvii.) that God would at length bring the good man out of trouble; meaning it of a temporal deliverance; it is such a tenet or sentiment as Job never held at all: and therefore it was impossible that he should retract it, Ch. xvii. or again renew and acquiesce in it, Ch. xix, or from thenceforward persevere in it without relapsing, &c.

BUT the concluding sentence of this paragraph is the strangest of all, *viz.* that this conduct of Job  
 “ agrees exactly with his general thesis, that pro-  
 “ vidence is not equally administered; for that the  
 “ *good man is frequently unhappy, and the wicked prospe-*  
 “ *rous*; yet that at last God will bring the good man out of  
 “ *trouble, and punish the wicked.*

I MUST begin with this strange sentence first—

IT seems then, this equal providence contended for, requires, that a good man should not be unhappy for a moment, nor the wicked prosper for a day; though the one be delivered and rewarded, and the other punished in the event. This (I confess) is carrying the notion of an equal providence farther than I could have imagined the author, or any other person, would have carried it. For I thought it had been sufficient to an equal providence in this life, if the good man were happy, the wicked miserable, upon the whole: if the one, though unhappy for a time, were amply rewarded in the event; the other, though prosperous for a while, were punished in the end according to his deserts. This, I am sure, is the way we have to shew that God governs the world by an equal provi-



dence, when we take the whole extent of our being, the other life as well as this, into the account.

No, but Job held all this, it seems; and yet his thesis was, "that providence is not equally administered." How shall we know what the learned writer means by his equal providence? Sometimes he makes it consistent with the final destruction of a good man, nay of many such, swept away together in a general calamity. But here he will not allow it to be consistent with such an one's being unhappy for a time, though delivered and rewarded in the issue.

THE truth is, the cause, he had undertaken to maintain, created all this embarrass; and made it necessary for him to assert thus much of Job: for how else should this good man know, that God would deliver him out of his trouble? Which way could he arrive at that confidence (as the author himself terms it) that he should have a temporal deliverance from his afflictions? It does not appear, that he had any particular revelation of it; and therefore his confidence (if he had any such) must proceed upon some such principle as this: that God would at length infallibly deliver the good man out of trouble. And again, this principle must be founded in that other of an equal providence. For whence otherwise could it arise, but from a persuasion, that God will most certainly do what is equal and exact in this life? And yet the ingenious author, as if fond of reconciling contradictions, makes Job's thesis to be this, that providence is not equally administer'd; at the same time that he ascribes to him a confidence, which could not possibly arise, but from the persuasion of an equal providence.

BUT let us recover a little from this astonishment; and proceed to the principle or tenet itself; which he tells us Job had held till now; that is, till he gave himself up to despair in the xviith chapter; which he repeated in the nineteenth, and persevered in ever after; namely, that *God would at length bring the good man*

*man out of trouble*, meaning of it a temporal deliverance.

Now I believe it will appear to those that read the book with care, that this is such a tenet as Job never held at all. And it is very remarkable, that the two only texts, which the learned writer could pick out, to give some shadow of a support to his notion, are plainly to be understood, not of any temporal deliverance, but of the hopes this good man entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judgment\*.

THE first is, Ch. xiii. 15, 16. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation; for an hypocrite shall not come before him.*

I THINK it is impossible to understand this of a temporal deliverance: for how should a man hope for this, though he were slain?

AND the other text is full as clear and intelligible—

CH. xiv. 13. *O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!*

FOR the sense of these words I need only quote Mr. W. himself, p. 510. where he says, “The excellent writer mentioned before, on the common supposition that these words are to be understood only of Job’s person, shews unanswerably, that he had some expectations of a future state—(*Use and Intent of Prophecy*, p. 240.)

THERE is no evading this text then, by the author’s own confession, but by allegory. Job must mean the Jewish people, and the grave the Babylonish captivity.

BUT, beside that this is departing from the literal sense without necessity, even this (I think) will scarcely serve his purpose. For though we should allow the allegory, and consequently that the words are not to be understood only of Job’s person? yet if they are to be understood of Job at all (and it must be a strange

\* P. 547. in the margin. v



allegory, if they are not) they shew unanswerably that he had some expectations of a future state.

So little is there in these texts to prove his hopes of a temporal deliverance.

NAY farther, the proposition "that God would at length bring the good man out of trouble," is so far from being held by Job, or being any part of his thesis; that it appears plainly on the contrary to have been the tenet of his adversaries in the debate; though (I think) not in the strict sense which the notion of an equal providence requires, yet as a thing to be hoped for from the goodness and other attributes of the Deity; and what therefore they earnestly endeavour to persuade Job of, and to make him hope for, but cannot.

THE very first speech of Eliphaz was intended to draw him out of that despair which he had shewn of his condition, by representing to him, that God seldom or never suffers the righteous man to perish without remedy; and that if he would but even now apply himself to God with a sincere repentance of those sins of which he supposed him guilty; it was to be hoped that God would soon restore him to his former happiness. But of this Job has no notion. His case was too desperate, he thought, to admit of such a hope, which required little less than a miracle to effect it. And therefore we find him still passionately wishing for death in the following speech of his, Ch. vi. 8, 9, *Oh that I might have my request! and that God would grant me the thing that I long for.*

*Even that it would please him to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand and cut me off!*

AND so, ver. 11. *What is my strength, that I should hope? And what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?*

ALL this and more that might be quoted to the same purpose, is utterly inconsistent, surely, with his believing that God would restore him to his former happy state; and believing it upon a principle

ciple (as the author contends) “ that God would at length bring the good man out of trouble.”

THE following speeches of the two other friends shew that they were in the same sentiments with Eliphaz: as Job’s reply to each shews that he likewise persisted in his former opinion.

BILDAH tells him, Ch. viii. 5—*If thou wouldst seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;*

*If thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.*

*Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.*

BUT what says Job in his reply?

CH. ix. 21, 22. *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my Life.*

*This is one thing, therefore I said it, he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.*

THE meaning of the former verse is sufficiently cleared by the latter: *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul, or life: i. e.* I would make no account of it—I would despise it, (as it follows)—for I should not think this perfection any security either for a long life or a prosperous. Much less, were I never so perfect, should I flatter myself with the vain hope you would instill into me, of being delivered from this deep distress wherein I am now plunged, and from which nothing but a miracle can restore me. For one thing I have learnt from experience, that God destroys the perfect as well as the wicked—And of this he gives a demonstration in the following verse: *If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent: that is,* ‘ In times of common calamity, such as war, or pestilence, or famine, the righteous and the wicked perish, for the most part indiscriminately.’ This is apparently the general course of providence. And if any exceptions be made, they are rare and extraordinary; by the special appointment and direction of the great lord and ruler of the



the world, for extraordinary reasons, of which he alone is judge. But no wise man would ever build any great hopes upon these extraordinary and excepted cases; at least, they can never be a just ground for confidence and assurance.

THIS seems plainly to be the sense of Job in this matter. For it is very observable, that Job builds his arguments on the general course of providence; the others argue chiefly from the extraordinary exceptions to it. They had seen a good man, now and then, remarkably delivered; they had seen many a wicked man remarkably punished. These remarkable things, as they are the most sensible demonstrations of a present providence; so Job's friends, whose thoughts were full of them, are thereby led to push the matter, of an exact, remunerating providence in this life, too far, so as scarce to allow a good man to be finally unhappy, or a wicked man prosperous upon the whole. And I suppose their own prosperity, which they were but too fond, perhaps, of ascribing to the blessing of God upon their piety, (for, except their hard censures of Job, there is nothing but what shews them to have been good and religious persons in the main) might help to confirm them in this notion; for it is an old observation, that we borrow our very thoughts and reasonings sometimes from the state and temper we are in.

Job therefore, on the other hand, being in a state of the deepest distress, we need not wonder that his thoughts were black and cloudy. That even with the conscience of an upright heart and innocent life, he could neither enjoy himself by day with chearful thoughts, nor prevent the dreadfulest dreams by night. *When I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint: then (says he) thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me with visions,* Ch. vii. 13, 14.

THE same melancholly disposition it was (no doubt) that made him dwell upon the general course of providence, which deals out things promiscuously, without allow-

allowing for those extraordinary and excepted cases; wherein God (as it were) makes bare his arm, to deliver a good man from distress; and of which he himself was, in the end, a noble instance.

BUT we have seen his present thoughts from the passages already produced: and more such might be quoted from this same speech of his; as particularly Ch. x. 15. *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head:* that is, 'I cannot, will not hope for any such temporal deliverance upon account of my righteousness, as you are endeavouring to persuade me of, from a mistaken principle; and according to which, if no such deliverance should happen, you are still resolved to condemn me as a wicked man.'

So far was Job from entertaining any such sentiment as the author ascribes to him, "that God would at length bring the good man out of trouble."

IF we examine the speech of Zophar, the third friend, which follows, Ch. xi. we shall find him speaking in the same strain with the others; and though he had the boldness to tell Job in the beginning of his speech, that his punishment was but just, nay, "less than his iniquity deserved;" yet he promises him a deliverance and restoration to a happy state, if he would but seriously repent.

*If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.*

*For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot—Thou shalt forget thy misery—Thine age shall be clearer than the noon day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning, &c. (Ch. xi. 14—17.)*

But (as he turns upon him in the conclusion of his speech, to shew him the danger of persisting in a wicked course) *the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost, ver. 20.*

THE answer of Job to this speech is pretty long. He complains of their treating him like a child, as if he had not some share of understanding as well as they,

to



to discern the ways of providence—— That when they charged him with secret crimes as the cause of his sufferings, (which was what Zophar had done but too plainly) they only mocked at his calamity. That he was as sensible, as they were, of the power of God, that he was able to do what he pleased; but this was no argument that he always either delivered the righteous, or punished the wicked. That therefore to conclude, as they did, from his sufferings, that he must needs be a wicked man, was to be guilty of wickedness themselves; it was *to speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him*, (Ch. xiii. 7.) as if he needed their rash censures, to vindicate the ways of his providence. This was such a fault, as they had but too much reason to fear, might one time or other draw down his severe chastisements on their own heads, (Ch. xiii. 10, 11.) *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons*; that is, if you judge thus rashly and unjustly even for him, or in vindication of his ways. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid? (as it follows) And his dread fall upon you?*

I must proceed a little further with this speech, because there is a remarkable passage to our purpose in the following verses, and such as may prepare the way for a right understanding of the great text in question.

VERSE 12, is utterly unintelligible in our translation, *Your remembrances are like unto ashes; your bodies to bodies of clay.*

HAD the Hebrew been turned literally, however obscure, a good sense might be picked out of it. It is thus,

*Your memorable sayings are speeches of ashes, to the backs of clay your backs.*

THE meaning of the first clause is pretty easy, viz. *Your answers are speeches of no value.* And perhaps the other may be interpreted, *You are thrown to your backs*, you are foiled in the argument. As wrestling was an exercise very famous among the ancients, a metaphor

phor taken from thence does not seem improbable. The Latine Vulgate comes very near this sense— *Et redigentur in lutum cervices vestrae*. And there are other allusions of the same kind to be met with in this book. For instance, Job xii. 3. *I am not inferiour to you*, is in the Hebrew, *lo nobel anoci mic-cem, non cadens ego a vobis*, or, *prae vobis*— I do not fall beneath you, I am not foiled or worsted by you\*.

HOWEVER, as the word *גב gab*, here used, not only signifies the back and shoulders of a man, but in general the prominent part of any thing, and therefore is put for the boss of a buckler, Job xv. 26. If we suppose the bosses here put for the bucklers, this likewise will afford a good sense, viz. *Your bucklers are (like) to bucklers of clay*— that is, your defensive weapons or arguments are weak.

BUT how much Job's friends were really foiled in the argument they had undertaken, will appear from the passage I am going to produce—

HE proceeds then,

CH. xiii. 13. *Hold your peace, let me alone that I may speak; and let come on me what will.*

\* *Schema ductum a gigantibus et nanis—vel a bellatoribus praestrenuis ante quos semet dejiciant imbelles*— says the learned Schultens in loc.

This is much better than Le Clerc's conjecture, That the phrase seems to be borrowed from a custom of the Orientalists, particularly the Persians, in their salutations; who, when they met a person that was greatly superior to them, used to fall prostrate. For which he quotes Herodotus, lib. i. cap. 134.

But what has this slavish ceremony of the Persians to do with Job's time and country? Amongst the honours paid to Job himself in the time of his prosperity, so particularly described Ch. xxix. though he was the greatest of all the men of the east his contemporaries; we do not find that prostration was ever used towards him, or so much as thought of. *The young men, when they saw him, through a rustick bashfulness, hid themselves: The aged arose, and stood up: The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand upon their mouth: The nobles held their peace*, (Ch. xxix. 8, 9, 10.) and were all attention when he spoke— Their tokens of respect, in short, were natural and manly; but no cringing. And one of the most convincing proofs of the antiquity of the book is this simplicity of manners every where so observable.



VERSE 14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand? i. e.* You ask me, Why I should consider my case as thus desperate; (for that is the meaning of the phrase putting his life in his hand) Why should you be thus slow to believe that God will deliver you out of your troubles? This looks as if you were conscious of some wickedness that rendered you unworthy of such a deliverance.

JOB'S answer to this charge follows immediately—No, it is not the want of a due hope or trust in God, occasioned by any wickedness I am conscious of, that makes me thus despair of my condition: for ver. 15: *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; but (still) I will maintain my own ways (my own integrity) before him.*

VER. 16. *He also shall be my salvation: For an hypocrite (a sycophant or false accuser\*, as the Hebrew word sometimes signifies) shall not come before him, to charge me with crimes of which I am not guilty in the future judgment.*

AND here he gives a very poetical turn to his speech; supposes himself as already dead, and standing before the tribunal of God; and bids his friends as in that awful presence, say what they had to charge him with.

VER. 17. *Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.*

VER. 18. *Behold now I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified—* As if he had said, I address myself to my trial, and plead not guilty.

VER. 19. *Who is he that will litigate the matter with me? For now I will be silent, and expire.*

THIS is the Hebrew rendered as literally as possible; and the meaning, I think, is clear, viz. *Who is he that*

\* Thus, at least, it is rendered by the Chaldee paraphrast, Job xx. 5. *Latitia delatoris ad momentum.* From whence a very eminent writer infers, that the paraphrast had an eye to Satan tempting our first parents—However, if we understand the word חֲשֹׁד according to its ordinary signification, it will afford a good sense, as thus—*He also shall be my salvation; for I am no hypocrite—*

*will bring a charge against me? For you are now to consider me as dead, and standing before the tribunal of God.*

THE translators, who did not comprehend the meaning of the words, have added an *if*, and so spoiled the whole turn of the sentence, thus,—*For now if I hold my peace, I shall give up the ghost.* But there is no *if* in the Hebrew; it is literally as rendered above, *I will be silent and expire.*

HERE then we must suppose Job to break off his speech for a moment, to see whether his friends would venture to accuse him of any thing when summoned before the Supreme Judge in this solemn and affecting manner. And as they had no particular crime to charge him with, nothing but a groundless suspicion against him; we may conclude, that they must needs remain as silent upon this occasion as Job, and as if they had expired in imagination with him.

UPON which this holy man seems to recollect himself; and as fearing he might have been too bold in his appeal, addresses himself in the following verses to the Judge himself, and beseeches him, in the most submissive manner, before he enters into judgment with him, to grant him two things; to withdraw his afflicting hand from him, and to vail the terrors of his majesty, that it might not strike him with too great a dread: and then to question him, and he would answer; or permit him to speak, and vouchsafe to inform him what his guilt was, and what were the reasons of these severe inflictions.

VERSE 20. *Only do not two things to me, then, will I not hide myself from thee.*

21. *Withdraw thine hand far from me; and let not thy dread make me afraid.*

22. *Then call thou, and I will answer: Or let me speak and answer thou me.*

23. *How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin.*

I could not forbear commenting upon this beautiful passage, because it shews very evidently, (as well as several other passages in his speeches) that Job looked forward



forward to a day of judgment, when he hoped to have his innocence cleared. Consequently, that there is nothing strange or new in the text under consideration, nothing but what well agrees with the whole tenour of the argument, as we understand it of a *future* not a *temporal deliverance*.—And with this remark I shall close this Section.

## S E C T II.

**B**UT before I proceed to consider the other argument of the learned writer, I must here digress a little, (if what seems necessary may be called a digression) vindicate the passage I have been now explaining, as well as some others of a parallel kind, from the *false gloss* unhappily put upon them by a celebrated commentator, I mean, the learned Dr. Alb. Schultens; who, though he has well explained many passages in the book of Job, is guilty of a strange mistake in more places than one; where he supposes this holy man, instead of appealing to God from the calumnies of his friends, to challenge God himself to contend with him in judgment.

It is thus he understands the words of Job above-cited, Ch. xiii. 19. *Who is he that will contend with me?* &c. as if they were addressed to God, and not his friends; or (at least) to both.—*Estne in terris non tantum, verum vel maximè in cælis*, &c. Whereas it is plain from the foregoing verses, that Job was speaking to his friends, and to them alone.

VERSE 17. *Hear ye diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.*

18. *Behold now I have ordered my cause: I know that I shall be justified.*

19. *Who is he, that will plead (or contend) with me?*

Which of you, (that is) who are now so severe in your censures of me, will venture to accuse me before the Supreme Judge?

IN

IN the following verses indeed, he turns to God, in the manner that has been observed in the former section, beseeching him in the first place to remove his pains and fears; and then to call him to his tryal, and acquaint him with the reasons of those sore chastisements; *to make him know his transgression and his sin*, if any thing had escaped his own knowledge or remembrance.

VERSE 20. *Only do not two things to me: then will I not hide myself from thee.*

21. *Withdraw thine hand far from me; and let not thy dread make me afraid.*

22. *Then call thou, and I will answer: Or let me speak, and answer thou me.*

23. *How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin.*

24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?*

25. *Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? &c.*

THERE is something so natural and so beautiful in the turns of thought, as they follow one another in this, and indeed most of Job's speeches, that when once I begin to quote, I scarce know where to make an end.

BUT how strangely has the learned commentator above-mentioned misunderstood this plain passage, and deformed it!

VERSE 22. *Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me*, he renders, 'Or let me speak, and do thou refute me; *Et tu refuta me*——As if Job were here challenging God to contend with, and convict him. Whereas the Hebrew word (as every one knows) signifies, simply, *to make answer, or reply*. And it appears from what follows immediately, that all the speaking Job intended for himself, and all the answer he desired of God, terminated in two things, *viz.* that God would discover to him his sins, and the reason of that seeming displeasure which he had against him.



BUT his explication of the following verse is much worse. For he supposes the question, "How many are mine iniquities and my sins?" to be put ironically. "It is not without some commotion (says he) and a certain irony, that Job puts the question, *How many?* As if he should say, Truly the catalogue of my sins must needs be very great, which hath called down from heaven so many and so great plagues upon my head; whereas I am not conscious to myself of any one very grievous crime."\*

How could it enter into the thoughts of a candid sensible commentator, that Job would use an irony in addressing himself to his Maker! Job, who had the profoundest apprehensions of his majesty and power; and who, as we learn from the foregoing verse, had so great a dread of him upon his mind, that he could not presume to address him at all, till this were first removed. But was this then the reason of his beseeching God to with-draw his dread or terror from him, that he might accost him presently in such indecent language?

THERE are other places, as I intimated, where this learned writer makes the same mistake; and supposes Job to challenge God as a party, when he only appeals to him as a judge.

THUS Ch. xvii. 2. *Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*

3. *Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee: Who is he that will strike hands with me?*

4. *For thou hast hid their heart from understanding; therefore thou shalt not exalt them.*

IT is very plain to me, that as Job, in the last verse, directs his speech to God; so in the two former, he points at, and addresses himself to his mistaken friends: *Are there not mockers with me? Lay down now,* (some

\* Note on Ch. xiii. 23. *Quantum] cam-mab. Non sine commotione & ironia quiddam ponitur rō cam-mab, Quotnam? quasi diceret, Enimvero ingens debet esse catalogus illa delictorum meorum, qui tot tantisque plagas in caput meum e caelo devocarvit, quum tamen nullius gra-vioris criminis mihi conscius sim.*

earnest or pledge) put me in a surety with thee: Who is he that will strike hands with me? Which of you, (that is) who thus mock and insult me, will venture to try your cause before the Supreme Judge? No—— They shew a want of understanding in thus rashly censuring me; and were they to bring their cause before thee, O God, thou wouldest not exalt them—— that is, they would be cast in the trial.

THIS sense, we see, is very obvious and easy: the change of the person addressed to, and the several breaks in the sentence here observable, only shew the earnestness of the speaker; and are both natural and elegant.

BUT what saith this learned commentator on the text? *Pone—* lay down now, &c. *Numinis ipsius provocatio, quæ petit ut Deus secum in judicium descendat, &c.* Job here challenges the Deity himself (says he) to go to a trial with him— And he refers to Ch. xiii. 18. (above considered) to support his notion.

BUT if Job had really challenged God; Can we suppose he would bid him lay down a pledge, give sureties, and the like? Or with what propriety and decency could that familiar demand, *Who is he that will strike hands with me?* be addressed to God. Moreover, if God was to be a party, who should be the judge? *He is not a man, as I am,* (says \* Job himself) *that we should come together in judgement; neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*

THE learned commentator's note on Chap. xxxi. 35, and following verses, is much to the same purpose, and is no less exceptionable.

VERSE 35. *Oh that one would hear me! Behold my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.*

36. *Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.*

37. *I would declare unto him the number of my steps: as a prince would I go near unto him.*

\* Chap. ix. 32.



I GIVE the vulgar translation, as I always chuse to do, unless I see a particular reason to depart from it, which is not often, for in the main it is, undoubtedly, a very good one. Nevertheless here, I apprehend, the words, *Behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me*, might be better render'd thus; *Lo here my sign or pledge, let the Almighty question me*. For the Hebrew word signifies equally, *let him answer me*, or, *let him make me to answer*\*. And in this last sense it is used Job xx. 3. *I have heard the check of my reproof, and the spirit of my understanding (וַיִּי) causeth me to answer*.

THE learned writer's note upon this passage is, *Omino ad Deum referendus adversarius ille vel litigator, Ish ribi, actor meus, &c.* that God must be here meant by the *adversary* or *prosecutor*; and Job's desire is, that a bill of indictment, containing the sum of his accusation, might be drawn up on the part of God.

BUT nothing can be more perverse than such an interpretation.

JOB here, as in other places, shews a great earnestness to come upon his tryal. They were his friends, and not God, that were his accusers: for God, he was well persuaded, would soon clear him, if he were but once admitted to come in judgment before him.

THE meaning therefore of the verse seems plainly to be this: *Mi sisten, &c. Quis dabit*—— 'Oh that I had but a hearing granted me! See there my mark† (or gage.) Let the Almighty interrogate me; and

\* It is remarkable, that there is no *Hiphil* conjugation of this verb עָנָה, (*vix. הִעֲנָה, respondere fecit*) at least in use. But the *Kal* supplies the want of it, and takes in both senses. It signifies either to begin a conference, and excite another person to speak, or to reply to him that speaks.—And so ἀποκρισάμις is used in the New Testament, as Luke xiv. 3. *Kai ἀποκρισάμις, &c.* And Jesus answering, said to the Lawyers and Pharisees, &c. But the Lawyers and Pharisees had said nothing to him; and it appears from what follows, that he questioned them.

† Heb. בֶּן יָאוֹן *ben iav-i, en signaturam meam vel signum meum*—something as a pledge or earnest that he would stand the tryal.

‘let any of you my accusers write a bill of indictment against me.’

It follows, ver. 36. *Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me:* that is, I would be so far from being ashamed or terrified, that I should rejoice and triumph in it; as knowing well that so impotent an accusation would only serve the more to clear my innocence. He adds, ver. 37. *I would declare unto him* (to the Almighty my judge) *the number of my steps;* as a prince would I approach him: that is, I would give him a full and free narration of my whole life, and would stand before him with a look as upright and assured as a prince.

Nothing can be plainer, than that the book, or libel, here supposed to be written by Job’s adversary, cannot be meant of one drawn up by God: for how was it possible for him to triumph in this? If it was a bill of accusation, coming from the God of truth; he had more reason to tremble (sure) than triumph: if it was a bill without an accusation, or without any crime alledged; What sort of an indictment was this?

AND yet this commentator supposes some such thing, in that confusion which error will always lead men into.

For he says, (in his note on *Scribat* \*, let him write, &c.) “The meaning is, I could wish that an instrument were drawn up on the part of God, and the sum of my accusation therein written, and produced in judgment against me. In such a libel nothing will be recorded, which shall argue me guilty of any wickedness, either publick or private; but on the contrary my innocence will thence shine forth clearer than the light.”

*\* Scribat*] Sensus, velim a parte Dei instrumentum litis, & accusationis meae summam, conscribi, & in judicium adversus me proferri. In eo libello nihil consignabitur, quod me scelere vel publico vel occulto proximum arguat, sed ex adverso, innocentia inde mea luce clarius resurgat.



So that here is a bill of indictment of a form quite new; an accusation without any crime alledged, if it be possible to conceive such a thing †.

I BELIEVE every man of plain sense will agree, that by the adversary, *Isb rib-i*, the man or person that contends with me, (as the Hebrew is) must be meant Job's friends, who were his only accusers that we know of. And God is here appealed to, as a hearer or a judge between them. And in this it is, that Job with reason triumphs, as being conscious of a well spent life; and therefore says, He would approach his judge with a look as upright and assured as a prince. *Cen o Nagid akorb-ennu*.

THIS clause likewise the learned commentator interprets strangely. "*Nagid* (says he, in his note) *Princeps, antecessor, hic speciatim strenui pugnatoris, ac ductoris, vim exerere videtur*." That *Nagid*, a prince or leader, is here to be understood in a military sense, of a stout champion, one that goes before, and leads on the rest to battle. Such an one, I suppose, he means, as Homer calls *ἡγεμῶν*.

BUT what a shocking image does this give us! That a man should approach his maker, as if he was going to fight with him! It is certain, there is nothing in the word *Nagid*, to countenance this notion: for like the word *princeps*, prince or chief, to which it answers, it receives its more precise determination from the place where it stands, or from some other word connected with it. Thus 2 Chron. xxviii. 7. *Nagid ba-haish*, chief of the house-hold; as civil an officer (to

† I have considered the sentence every way, to see if I could find another meaning than this strange one: but all to no purpose: for if it be true, as he says, *Omnino ad Deum referendus adversarius ille, vel litigator*, *Isb rib-i*, *adversarius meus*, &c. that God is here to be considered as Job's adversary, or Litigator, the *Isb rib*, the *Prosecutor*; and the indictment is to be drawn up on the part of God; then, surely, there could be no false allegation in it, (as it sometimes happens in mere human writings of this sort) nor, on the other hand, could there be a crime truly charged upon him; since his innocence was to appear from thence, and that even clearer than the light.

be sure) as can be desired\*. What room then can there possibly be for this untoward criticism?

I SHALL take notice but of one place more, where this learned writer is guilty of the same error of interpretation. It is at the beginning of Chapter xxiii. where Job being provoked to a high degree by the freedom Eliphaz had taken with him in his last speech, in charging him directly with the most enormous sins—*Is not thy wickedness great (says he) and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing, &c.* (Ch. xxii. 5, 6.) I say, Job, being highly exasperated at this usage, turns to God, according to his custom, and earnestly begs that he would bring him to his tryal; that he would hear the matter fully, and determine betwixt him and his friends.

THE passage is a very fine one; and therefore I shall quote it at large.

CH. xxiii. 1. *Then Job answered and said,*

2. *Even to day is my complaint bitter: (and yet) my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*

3. *O that I knew where I might find him! (God) that I might come even to his seat (or tribunal.)*

4. *I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.*

5. *I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.*

6. *Will he plead against me with his great strength? No, but he would put (strength) into me.*

7. *There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*

8. *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:*

\* Le Clerc on Prov. viii. 6. says, that נָגִיד (Nagid) from נָגַד (neged) coram, signifies properly, one that walks before to show the way—*qui ambulat in negotio, in negotio, coram nobis, ut videret nos*, says he. But it is much more likely to signify, one that stands coram rege, before the King; meaning his chief officers of every fort.



9. On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.

10. But he knoweth the way that I take: When he hath tryed me, I shall come forth as gold.

I BELIEVE a candid reader can see nothing in all this, but an earnest desire in Job to come before his judge, and take his tryal; that he might be delivered, once for all, from the unjust suspicions of his friends.

No, says the learned annotator, "In this speech" "he does not appeal to the tribunal of God, that he" "might there refute the accusations thrown upon him" "by his friends; but, v. 3. he shews himself ready" "for a congress with the Deity himself, to maintain" "his own cause against him even armed with his" "tremendous majesty; nothing doubting but he" "should return victor from that congress; since he" "knew he should be found both inwardly and out-  
wardly pure as gold, and was conscious to himself" "of no transgression."

THE military terms here used, of "congress with" "the Deity," victory over him, and the like, sound to me (I own) extremely harsh and disagreeable: nor is there the least room for them from the text, but only from his mistaken gloss upon it.

ON ver. 4. *I would order my cause, &c.* He observes that the verb *varac* (order) is a word of a military sense, and is used for drawing up an army †. But so it is for drawing up a speech, (Job xxxii. 14.) or preparing a table for entertainment, (as *Isai. xxi. 5. Psal. xxiii. 5.*) Moses uses the very same word (*Levit. vi. 12.*) for preparing a burnt-offering; and David (*Pf.*

\* *In eo non ad Dei Tribunal provocat, ut ibi crimina sibi imputata revocare licet; sed (Per. 3.) cum Numine ipso se congressi paratissimum ostendit, ad causam suam contra eum, vel Majestate sua formidabili armatum sustinendam: nullus dubitans, quin victoriam ex illo congressu sit reportaturus, quippe qui auri instar se intus & extus purum invenirendum esse sciat; nullusque sibi transgressionis sit conscius. Vide Argument. Capit. 23.*

† *Eadem ardore adjectum exrecat, instrucrim velut in acie* — Note on ver. 4.

v. 3.) for addressing himself to his devotions—— So that this criticism is evidently without foundation †.

AND then for v. 6. *Will he plead against me with his great strength? No, but he will put into me: that is, he will put strength into me,* (as our translators rightly understand and fill up the sentence †.) This learned writer renders it thus, *Num multitudine roboris sui contendet mecum? Dummodo non hostilem ipse impetum faciat in me: that is, 'Will he contend with me with his much strength?—— So he does not make a hostile incursion on me.'*

I CONFESS, I can scarce make sense of this; no, not with the help of his note, where he explains it thus—— *Placetne ei pro multitudine roboris sui mecum contendere? Faciat sanè. Non detrecto congressum. Tantummodo ne hostiliter invadat me, ut nunc facit, me telis suis confgens, &c.* 'Does it please him to contend with me with his much strength? Let him do it; I de-

† And yet *Le Clerc*, (who was fond of catching at every seeming absurdity in the book of Job, to prove it a parable, not a true history,) interprets this passage as *Schultens* does, of Job's challenging God to contend with him; and gives the same force to the verb *parac*. And then adds this sly remark, in his way; that "the story, if a true one, must be allowed to be somewhat embellished by the writer: for to challenge God to the conflict, is too audacious for any mortal, especially if we suppose him a religious person." *Attamen fatendum a Scriptore hujus libri, si res vera contigisse statuatur, exornatam non nihil fuisse; est enim supra humanam audaciam Deum ad certamen provocare, præsertim si homo religiosus statuatur.*

But these false embellishments, he speaks of, are not the sacred writer's, but the idle dreams of his commentators.

† *Munster* and *Vatablus*, two of the most judicious among the critics, follow this sense. *Le Clerc* gives another, not quite so natural, but a very good one, if the Hebrew will bear it, thus—— "Will he contend with me with his great might? No, but he would attend to me." He would give me a patient hearing, and attend to the reasonableness of my plea: which you do not—— There is but one exception to this interpretation, that I know: for *jafun*, he will put, the word here used, is sometimes meant, elliptically, for *jafun leb*, to put the heart, (as *advertere* for *advertere animum*, in *Latine*;) but then the preposition after it should be *yal* or *el*, not *be*, as here. We set the heart upon a thing, or attend to it, not in or into it—— *Simu la-cem yal eba, ponite vobis super illud, id est, ponite cor—— consider of it, Jud. xix. 30.*



'cline not the congress. Only let him not invade me  
'hostilely, as he now does, wounding me with his  
'darts, &c.'

I WONDER what nice distinction this learned man had in his thoughts, betwixt invading a man hostilely, and contending with him with the multitude or muchness of his strength, that could make him think there was sense in this explication. If there be, I am sure it is a sense very unworthy of Job. And yet for the sake of it, he has broke in upon the order of the words; instead of *lo ac*, reading *ac lo*, and giving to the word *jafim* \* a meaning very unusual, and, I believe, unprecedented.

If I have been a little severe in my animadversions on this learned commentator, the only reason is, because I think he has defaced some of the finest passages in the book of Job, by an overstrained and forced interpretation. And all for I know not what — to make this good man appear worse than need, and to turn a passionate expression, too warm and unguarded perhaps, though the dictate of a heart the most upright and sincere, into something highly criminal, and of a giant-like impiety.

In short, there is something so absurd, and so abhorrent from the character of Job, in the challenges of this kind, which this author makes for him; that I

\* There is one place indeed, where our translators have rendered the words, *simu*, and *jafimu*, by *setting in array*, (1 Kings xx. 12.) And Ben-badad said unto his servants, *Set [yourselves in array:] And they set [themselves in array] against the city.*

But I believe, this translation (or rather explanation, for the words inclosed in hooks are added to the Hebrew, and therefore, with great judgment, are printed in our Bibles in a different character,) is a mistake. For Ben-badad was at this time frolicking it in his tent with the other kings about him, and did not seem to be in haste to attack the city. The command to his servants therefore was only to keep a good look-out (as they call it) towards the city. And soon after it was told him, *Saying, there are men come out of Samaria, &c.* ver. 17.

So that *simu* here, as in other places, is put for *simu leb*, or *libbecem*, *set your hearts*, mind, attend, keep a watch — *ve jafimu*, and they set their hearts, &c. upon the city —

must

must see much clearer evidence for it than I have yet seen, before I can admit a thought of it.

INDEED we find Job himself, in one place, expressly disclaiming all such bold and sawcy challenges, as a thing not only foolish in itself, but as tending to provoke the Deity, and to render his condition so much worse, if he should dare to use it.

A GREAT part of his speech, in the ixth chapter, is taken up in shewing, what a folly and presumption it would be for so weak and ignorant a creature as man, to contend in judgment with his Maker, who is infinite in wisdom and power.

CHAP. IX. 1. *Then Job answered, and said,*

2. *I know it is so of a truth: But how should man be just with God?*

3. *If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.*

4. *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*

So verse 15. *Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge.*

AND verse 19. *If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?*

20. *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*

THIS and more we have to the same purpose, in that chapter: but I cannot omit this writer's own note on verse 17. which, if he himself had duly attended to, might have convinced him, that the turn he has given to so many other passages in Job's speeches, is quite wrong. It is thus, Ch. ix. 17. *Quippe qui] Quasi dicat, Quid enim non paterer, si Deum in jus trahere, atque laceffere, auderem, a quo non laceffuto, non provocato, tam graviter adfligor?* "As if, (says he) Job had said, For "what might I not expect to suffer, if I should dare "to challenge God to contend with me in judgment; "by whom, without any such provocation, I am so "grievously afflicted."

AND yet in the following speeches, this learned commentator supposes Job to make many such challenges,



lenges, and seems to take a pleasure in aggravating the rash indecency and presumption of the terms or expressions, wherein he would have them to be delivered.

I DENY not, but that Job, in the extremity of his grief, is sometimes carried away too far, in his expostulations with his Maker; nor do I pretend to vindicate every expression that fell from this afflicted man. But (surely) there is a vast difference betwixt contending with God as a party and pleading before him as a judge. In the representation given us of the general judgment, it is remarkable, that even the guilty wretches are allowed to speak for themselves, and to make their defence as well as they can—— *When saw we thee an hungry, or athirst—— and did not minister unto thee?* And shall not a good man then be allowed to appeal to the great Searcher of hearts for his integrity, when pursued with the unjust suspicions and calumnies of men? Especially, when they make the dispensations of God towards him the chief ground of their accusations.

In such distress indeed, it is but too natural, (perhaps) and usual, even for very good men, to be transported beyond the bounds of reason; nor do I plead for any absolute perfection in Job. Let God's judgment be the rule of ours—— He accepted of the uprightness of his heart, and approved of his reasoning in the main, by declaring that he had *spoken of him the thing that was right*; though at the same time he gives him a very just but gentle rebuke, for his having uttered *words without knowledge*.

He had, no doubt, his share of human ignorance and infirmity; and let him bear his errors: they are fewer than most of us, (I dare say) in his place and circumstances, should have committed. Let us but give him a fair hearing, and lay no more than a candid and equitable construction on his words; and, with all his imperfections, he will still shine out *an admirable example both of piety and patience*.

BEFORE

BEFORE I close this section, it may be proper to inform the reader, that for want of the larger commentary of Schultens, I have quoted all along from the notes extracted from it by the very learned Dr. Grey, in his edition of Job. I hope, without offence to the worthy editor; to whom the world is greatly obliged for the useful books that he has published, and for this among the rest. For though I cannot but think his annotator a little hyper-critical in some places, there are many good observations in it, and several dark passages well explained. But whoever attempts to write on the book of Job, must be a happy man indeed, if he does not commit some errors. My own, perhaps, may make the subject of another's observation. I have written with freedom from the love I bear to truth; and where I have been guilty of mistakes, can be content that others should animadvert upon me as freely, if they think it worth their while.

UPON the whole, I must desire the learned editor of the book of Job (whose humanity is no less conspicuous in his writings than his learning) to recollect, that whatever has been said in this section, in opposition to his author Schultens, was no more than what I was obliged to in defence of Job and his character; and then I persuade myself, he will interpret it with that candour which is so natural to him.

THE same consideration will, I hope, excuse me to the reader for the treatment here given that learned Hollander, who since the writing of this part, I am very sorry to find by the news-papers, is dead: an event, which put me at the first in doubt whether I ought not wholly to omit this section. For it brought to my mind a saying of old Homer's, (and I own I have a great value for Homer's sayings) thus cited with a little variation in another classical writer\*,

Οὐχ ὅστις φθιμένοισιν ἐν ἀνδράσιν εὐχέλαια θάλλει.

BUT the doubt was soon removed, when I reflected that a book survives after the author is gone; and that

\* *Plin. Ep. 1. Lib. 9. from Hom. Od. X. 412.*



all lesser considerations should give place to that respect we owe the Holy Scriptures.

It is this respect alone induces me to add, that if so great a master of the language fell into those repeated mistakes upon this head; it ought to make us cautious how we give too easy credit to the commentators, where they advance things that bear hard upon the character of Job. A license but too little scrupled by some of them, as ill as it comports with the design of the book, and derogatory as it is to the great example there set us for our instruction and imitation.

### S E C T. III.

**B**UT to return to the learned author of *the Divine Legation*—

WE have seen what little grounds he had to ascribe it to Job as “his fixed sentiment, that God would at length bring the good man out of trouble”†.

I HAVE shewn that this was so far from being a tenet of Job’s, that it was the tenet of his friends or adversaries in the debate; what they earnestly endeavoured to persuade him of, but without success.

AND indeed, were this the fixed belief of Job, (as the author supposes) that God would at length vouchsafe him a temporal deliverance; his tragical complaints must needs appear ridiculous: his frequent wishing for death would be utterly unaccountable; and his patience so very little, that posterity could never have regarded him as a pattern and example of it.

No, his only hope was, that his innocence would be cleared in the day of judgment; but it was a most affecting concern and grief to him, that it could not be cleared before: that after a life led in the practice of the most eminent and conspicuous virtues, he must nevertheless suffer in the opinions of his nearest friends, and have his fame (the dearest thing in the world to a

† D. L. Vol. 2. p. 548.

good man, next to his integrity) transmitted with a blemish to posterity, never to be wiped off again till the day of judgment.

THIS was (in short) the circumstance that touched him most: that made him so often wish, that God would bring him to his tryal; even here, if possible, in this life, that so he might convince those friends of his, of their extreme rashness and folly. It was this indeed, that raised his sufferings to their utmost height; and if it does not warrant, yet will serve to extenuate and excuse all the passionate complaints that fell from him.

BUT having considered what the learned writer urges for the understanding this passage of Job's hope or confidence of a *temporal deliverance*, and shewn the weakness and insufficiency of it; let us now examine what he has produced against the other sense; the understanding the passage of a *resurrection*, and a day of judgment— And I believe we shall find him as much mistaken here, as in his former argument.

AND first he says, “The disputants are all equally  
“embarrassed to account for the ways of providence”  
— But “the doctrine of a *resurrection*, supposed to be  
“urged by Job, cleared up all this embarrass. If  
“therefore his friends thought it true, it ended the  
“dispute: if they thought it false, it lay upon them  
“to confute it. Yet they do neither: they neither  
“call it into question, nor allow it to be decisive.  
“But, without the least notice that any such thing  
“had been urged, they go on, as they begun, to en-  
“force their former arguments, and to confute that  
“which they seem to understand was the only one Job  
“urged against them, *viz.* The consciousness of his  
“own innocence” \*.

Now this last particular might have convinced the author, (one would think) that he has entirely mistaken the question. For the point in dispute betwixt Job and his friends, is not whether the providence of God in this life be equal or unequal; but whether Job

\* D. L. Vol. 2. p. 544.



were innocent or guilty. In the course of their dispute indeed, they draw arguments on both sides, from the *Providence of God*. The friends insinuate, that Job must needs be wicked; for that God seldom or never afflicts in so extraordinary a manner, but for sins of an extraordinary size. Job on the other hand defends himself, by setting before them another view of *Providence*, and bids them reflect how many they had known in their time, who were notoriously wicked, who had nevertheless prospered for a long course of years, and no extraordinary calamity ever befell them in their lives or in their deaths. And though it was not so easy to discern who were good men, (a bad inside being often covered by a fair appearance;) yet he bids them consider, what ravages were sometimes made either by the pestilence or sword; and they must needs be convinced, that many good men must suffer with the rest, in those great and general devastations. So that no certain argument could be drawn of men's being good or bad, from what they enjoyed or what they suffered here in this world. And therefore it was rash in them, to regard him as a wicked man, without any apparent reason for it, besides the greatness of his sufferings.

THIS is evidently the way of reasoning on both sides; and the immediate purpose for which Job declares his hope of a resurrection and a day of judgment, is not to vindicate the ways of providence, but by such a solemn appeal, to convince them (if possible) of his innocence.

AND so, we see, they understood it, by the author's own confession; though they refused to be convinced by it——

BUT Mr. W. proceeds thus:

“ BUT to be a little more particular. It fell to Zophar's part to answer the argument contained in the words in question, which I understand to be this  
 “ —— Take, says Job, this proof of my innocence,  
 “ I believe and confidently expect that God will visit  
 “ me

“ me again in mercy, and restore me to my former  
 “ happy condition. To this Zophar, in effect, re-  
 “ plies, But why are you so miserable now? For he  
 “ goes on in the twentieth chapter, to describe the  
 “ punishment of the wicked to be just such a state as  
 “ Job then laboured under. He does not directly say,  
 “ *The good are not miserable*; but that follows from the  
 “ other part of the proposition, which he here infoces  
 “ as a little more modest, *The bad are never happy*.  
 “ Now suppose Job spoke of the *resurrection*, Zophar  
 “ answered quite wide of the purpose” \*.

HE does so, indeed, according to your representa-  
 tion of the purport of his speech; but to those who  
 consider it attentively, I believe it will appear other-  
 wise, viz. that Zophar understood Job to speak of a  
 resurrection, and a day of judgment; and that he  
 frames his reply accordingly.

AFTER that solemn declaration of his faith and  
 hope in a resurrection, Job adds a few words more to  
 close his speech; and they are very remarkable ones:  
 such as (I think) confirm the common interpretation  
 of this famous text, and are impossible to be recon-  
 ciled with the other.

VER. 27. *My reins are consumed within me*—— That  
 is, I feel my very vitals fail me, and am hastening  
 on apace, towards that death, which shall consign me  
 to the future judgment.

HERE is a just coherence and agreement with what  
 went before. But what can we make of this text, if  
 the foregoing passage is to be understood of a *temporal*  
*deliverance*? Does he hope and despair in a breath?

HE then desires them not to persecute him any  
 more, since *the root of the matter or argument* (that is,  
 the strength of it) *was found in him*, (ver. 28.) was evi-  
 dently on his side. And bids them beware they were  
 not convinced to their cost of the certainty of a righte-  
 ous judgment hereafter, by the experience of some or  
 other of these common plagues, which God was often-  
 times seen to distribute in this life. He mentions the  
 sword particularly, which destroys promiscuously the



good and bad without distinction; and is sent, or suffered by God with this intent, that men may from thence infer there is a judgment. The expression in the Hebrew is remarkable— *For wrath* (that is, the wrath of God) *bringeth the iniquities of the sword, (Yayonoth chereb) that ye may know there is a judgment—* (Ch. xix. 29.) Intimating, that the violence and iniquity which always accompanies the ravages of the sword; the many unjust and cruel things which are done and suffered amidst the rage of war; and, in short, every dispensation of providence which levels the good and bad in this life, is a demonstration of a righteous judgment to be expected hereafter.

THAT this must be the meaning, seems plain; nor can the passage well be understood of any other, than a future judgment. For what other judgment was it that Job's friends wanted to know, or be put in mind of? God's judgments upon sinners here in this life? No certainly—— It was their great error, that they carried this point to an excess; and interpreted all the calamities sent by God in this world, even upon particular persons, as so many judgments; at least, they considered Job's afflictions as such. It was therefore quite foreign to his purpose, to go about to persuade them of temporal judgments inflicted by God. But what he was most of all concerned to put them in mind of, was, that there was a future judgment to be expected after this life. Had they been as well assured of this as they should be, or had they well considered it, they would have seen less occasion for a strict retribution here in this life; and, consequently, would have been less forward to interpret God's inflictions upon Job, as if they were a judgment on him for some secret wickedness——

BUT let us proceed to Zophar's reply, which immediately follows, Chap. xx. 1. *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,*

2. *Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste.*

3. *I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.*

4. *Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth,*

5. *That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment, &c.*

WE see this adversary of Job's, who seems to be of the most violent temper of the three, instead of being convinced by his appeal, immediately turns the argument upon him; *Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, &c.* As if he had said,

SINCE you have mentioned the *future judgment* then, give me leave to put you in mind of what history informs us from the beginning of the world, that *the triumphing of the wicked is but short, and the joy of the hypocrite only for a moment.* Short, in respect of that swift destruction which sometimes befalls them here; but shorter still, compared with that futurity we all expect: for he seems to have an eye to both in this speech.

THE words, *Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth, &c.* undoubtedly refer to the story of the first man; whose joy was short indeed, for he was judged and sentenced soon after he had sinned.

BUT the following part of the speech gives us (I think) a very lively description of the effects which the consideration of a future judgment usually has upon the minds of wicked men; how it fills them with the greatest horrors in the midst of their enjoyments.

THAT though it may not always restrain men from oppression; yet it makes their children seek to please the poor, by restoring to them what their fathers had unjustly spoiled them of. Nay, sometimes the wicked wretch himself shall be so touched in conscience, that his own hand shall restore what he had taken. Verse 10. *His children shall seek to please the poor; and his hands shall restore their goods.*

HE goes on to observe, that *though wickedness be sweet in the mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; yet*



*his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. He hath swallowed down riches, and shall vomit them up again,* ver. 12, 14, 15.

AND in the same strain, verse 16, 17. *He shall suck the poison of asps; the viper's tongue shall slay him. He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter*—That is, he shall not see them with any pleasure—the most delightful things of this world, and the greatest affluence and plenty of them, shall afford him no enjoyment.

*That which he laboured for* (as it follows verse 18.) *he shall restore and shall swallow it down*—Surely, *he shall not feel quietness in his belly*—In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits—God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating. He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through. Terrors are upon him—All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him—This is the portion of a wicked man from God, &c. (Verse 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.)

WE see then, that this speech of Zophar does not describe the punishment of *the wicked to be just such a state as Job then laboured under*, (as Mr. W—— would have us think) meaning a state of outward calamity. Some strokes of this kind indeed appear to be mixed with it; but what he chiefly labours to describe, is a state of inward terror and perplexity, arising from a sense of guilt, and the apprehension of that future judgment, which Job had mentioned in the conclusion of his speech. In short, he takes occasion from the mention of it, to set out with all the force of his eloquence, the anxiety and distraction which the thoughts of it do sometimes create in the bosom of a wicked man. And as he still suspected Job for such, he tries, by this tragical description, if it were yet possible to scare him into a confession—

So that they who imagine, that Job's friends, in their following speeches, take no notice of this famous protestation of Job's, seem quite to have overlooked

looked the plain drift of this speech of Zophar, which contains a very elegant description of the restless state of wicked men, and their inward horrors and anguish, arising (as I apprehend) from this very persuasion of a future judgment.

NAY, there is an expression, verse 11. which seems directly to assert, that there is a punishment attends the wicked in a future state—*His bones, says he, are full of the sin of his youth, (or his secret sin, as it may be rendered) which shall lie down with him in the dust* \*. Had this been found in the New Testament, I believe Mr. W—— himself would have thought it parallel with that expression in the revelation, *that men's works do follow them*.

MONS. Le Clerc was aware, that some punishment after death was here intended; and imagines it to be, that his bones might be dug up again out of his grave, and scattered. But this (sure) is something too particular to be meant here, where the general portion of the wicked is described—Beside that here is no intimation of any thing dug up; but of something that shall lie down with him in the grave.

WHAT is here said of the bones of the wicked, puts me in mind of a contrary expression used by the prophet Isaiah, where he describes the happy state of the righteous at the resurrection in the following terms, *that their heart shall rejoice, and their bones shall flourish like an herb*, Isa. lxvi. 14. And from hence, probably it was, that the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus borrowed his expression, Chap. xlix. 10. *And of the twelve prophets let the memorial be blessed, and let their bones flourish again out of their place; i. e. may they obtain a joyful resurrection*.

BUT the author proceeds to another argument against understanding this famous passage of a resurrection, and a day of judgment.—

\* See a parallel expression, Ezek. xxxii. 27. of mighty warriors buried with great military pomp, and with their swords laid under their heads; but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.



2. "But what is still more unaccountable, (says he) Job, when he resumes the dispute against his friends, sticks to the argument he first set out with; and though he found it gave them little satisfaction, repeats it again and again. But this other argument of a resurrection, so full of piety and conviction, which they had never replied to, he never once resumes; never upbraids his adversaries for their silence, nor triumphs, as well he might, in their inability to answer it" \*.

Now supposing this were true, that Job never mentions the resurrection in his following speeches, nor any thing alluding to it, (which, whether it be so or not, we shall see hereafter) yet a very sufficient reason may be assigned for it: for if one such appeal as this, made in the most solemn manner, would not convince them of his innocence; I suppose he had reason to think, it would be much the same if he had repeated it a second and a third time. And therefore he had no other resource left, but to follow the argument he had begun with; that is, to combat the false principle upon which they were so forward to condemn him. And this he does effectually, in his reply to Zophar, Ch. xxi. by shewing that many wicked men live long and prosper, and at last die in peace, and are buried with great pomp: which shews that this life is not the proper state of retribution; but men shall be judged and recompensed hereafter—

But the author adds further, (p. 545.) that if Job here "spoke of a resurrection, he not only contradicts the general tenour of his argument, but likewise what he says in many places concerning the irrecoverable dissolution of the body."

In the note he points at three or four texts, but insists particularly on Job. xiv. the 7th and following verses. *For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again—But man dieth, &c.* As there is something in this, and the other texts, of importance

\* D. L. Vol. 2. p. 545.

to be well cleared up; I propose to give them a thorough examination in the next section.

THE last argument produced by the author against understanding this passage of a resurrection, runs thus—

3. “ BUT what is strangest of all, when the two  
“ parties had quite confounded themselves and  
“ one another, for want, as one would think, of this  
“ principle of a resurrection, which so easily unravels  
“ all the perplexities of the dispute, the fourth friend,  
“ the moderator, steps in, as the *precursor* of the  
“ Almighty, the great decider of the controversy.  
“ Here then we might reasonably think that the ho-  
“ nour of the solution, which the doctrine of the  
“ resurrection affords, was reserved for these; but to  
“ our great surprize, they neither of them give the  
“ least hint concerning it — Elihu justifies God’s  
“ conduct; God bears witness to Job’s innocence;  
“ yet both concur in resolving all into power omni-  
“ potent. This tends more to cloud than clear up  
“ the obscurities of the debate: whereas the doctrine  
“ of a resurrection had rendered every thing plain  
“ and easy. In a word, no solution is given, though  
“ a decision be made. All this is quite unaccounta-  
“ ble to our faculties of understanding” \*.

WHEN a person looks at things in a wrong light, it is no wonder that they appear quite unaccountable to his faculty of understanding.

THE great question in debate betwixt Job and his friends was, Whether this miserably afflicted man were innocent or guilty. In the conclusion, God himself pronounces him innocent. Here then is a decision made in Job’s favour; and moreover, a question about providence determined to our satisfaction, viz. That great sufferings are not always an argument of great sins; but that a very good man may be sometimes extremely wretched here in this life.

WHAT other solution would the learned author have; or what other solution could he have thought

\* D. L. Vol. 2. p. 546.



of, had not his imagination run upon that strange notion of an equal providence, which he will have to be the subject of this debate?

As to God's not mentioning the doctrine of the resurrection; we may ask, what should he mention it for? for it will appear, I believe, when we have well examined the text under consideration, that Job very firmly and heartily believed it: and whether his friends believed it or not, yet they understood what he meant, when he urged it, and would not allow it to be decisive of the point in dispute between them, *viz.* Whether Job were innocent. But God's pronouncing him innocent was, to be sure, instead of all other arguments; and must put an end to the controversy at once.

I SHALL take leave, however, to observe a few things from this speech of the Deity, which are very much to our purpose.

As first, that the divine omnipotence, as displayed in the works of the creation, which is here set out with an astonishing sublimity, was an argument (if duly attended to) sufficient to remove all the doubts and perplexities, which these overwarm reasoners had fallen into in their disputes. For if God created all things, he must have a concern for all his creatures; and if he can do all things, he can have no temptation to do wrong. And therefore his being infinitely powerful, gives a certain assurance, that he must and will set every thing to rights at one time or another. If he does not do it in this life, he certainly will do it hereafter. And this, no doubt, is the inference which they are left to draw for themselves.

BUT farther yet, the divine omnipotence is likewise a full answer, in particular, to all the objections that have been, or can be made, (I think) to the doctrine of the resurrection: and therefore was extremely apposite, and proper to confirm Job in the belief of it; and to convince the others, if they doubted or disbelieved it. For the wonders of God's creation, which this speech describes in the most lively colours, is a  
visible

visible proof and demonstration, how easy such a new creation (as we may term it) the restoring man again out of the dust, from whence he was first taken, and into which he is resolved, must needs be to God.

THIS therefore is an argument, which we find very much insisted on by the first apologists for christianity, *Minutius Faelix*, *Tertullian*, *Athenagoras*, and others; and with which they answered all the cavils of their Heathen adversaries: and I am persuaded it is an argument that will stand all tryals.

THE last thing I shall observe from this speech at present is, that God by the display of his omnipotence not only shews Job what large amends he could make good men for all their sufferings in the great day of the resurrection; but hints to him by that question, Ch. xxxviii. 17, that he could as easily do it before; and admit them to what degree of happiness he pleased, immediately upon their dissolution: *Have the gates of death* (says he) *been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?* That is, hast thou looked into *Sheol*, the intermediate state, the region of departed spirits? Hast thou seen (says God) how the souls of men are disposed after death, and how amply the afflictions of good men may be made up to them there? What room then for such complaints as you have now been uttering? This seems apparently the drift of the question.

IN short, the great lesson we are to learn from this divine speech, and the decision here put to the controversy is, that our disputes about the providence of God proceed from ignorance and folly: That the first duty of a creature is to resign himself to the will of his creator; to do his commands with pleasure; receive his dispensations with submission; be thankful to him for the good, and patient under the evil which he sends: to consider life, with its appendages, as the free gift of God; which therefore we should employ in his service, be ready to give up freely when he calls for it, and trust him for a future happy state.



## S E C T. IV.

WHATEVER other imperfections there may be in this slight performance, (interrupted and resumed by intervals, as either my leisure or disposition for it would permit,) I hope the learned author, with whom I differ in opinion, will not be able to charge me with any unfair representation of his arguments, since I give them in his own words; nor with a want of deference to the force of them, if, where he does but point at texts of scripture, I take the pains to examine them at large, so that a line of his sometimes costs me whole pages; a compliment I should not care to pay to a writer of less eminence.

In his note, p. 545, he refers us to some texts, where Job (according to him) speaks of the "irrecoverable dissolution of the body;" particularly Chap. xiv. 7. and following verses, *For there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again. But man dieth, &c.* Upon which he asks the following question; *Could such a one think of the body like him who said, But some man will say, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain, &c.*

THE question here put is, Could Job think of the body, and its future resurrection like St. Paul.

I ANSWER, why not? the passages perhaps, when well considered, will not appear to be very different. At the worst, there is no contradiction in them, that should make us think the speakers were of opposite sentiments.

WE do not say indeed, that Job spoke of a resurrection in so clear a manner as St. Paul; nor is it necessary to our purpose to maintain it. But that he thought and spoke of a resurrection, and that

that in this very chapter, will be seen perhaps, when we have thoroughly examined it. A single sentence may be easily mistaken; but take the context with it, and it sets you right again. Let us enquire then into the drift and purport of this chapter, which is indeed a remarkable one.

As Job begins it with a reflection on the shortness and the wretchedness of human life, a truth he had so sadly learned from experience; so in the progress, as was natural, he seems to be casting about for arguments of support and consolation, under these distressed circumstances: and particularly for a proof from reason, to confirm him in the belief of what they had received an obscure tradition of, the resurrection of mankind to another life.

AND ver. 7. he touches upon that argument from the analogy of things, which has been so often made use of in treating upon this subject: *For there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again.* Heb. *ve-yod jacaliph*, will yet renew itself, will revive and flourish as the spring comes on. This description is pursued for three verses. Then ver. 10. *Ve-geber jamuth, &c. And man dieth, and wasteth away. Man expires and where is he?*

As if he had said, After a tree is cut down, we see nevertheless the old stock flourish again, and send forth new branches; and shall man then, when he once expires, be extinct for ever? Is there no hope that he shall revive, and be raised again hereafter?

Yes there is, according to the doctrine delivered to us from our ancestors; but then they inform us, at the same time, that this resurrection shall not be but with the dissolution and renovation of the world.

VER. 11, 12. *The waters go off from the sea, and the flood (nabar, the river) will decay and dry up. And man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more; (till then) they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*

THE



THE meaning seems to be, that as we see every thing in flux, and subject to change, so the whole shall one day be changed. The sea itself will at length be quite absorbed; and the running rivers, which now flow perpetually, as if supplied by everlasting springs, will nevertheless in time quite cease and disappear: this visible frame of things shall be dissolved, and the present heavens themselves shall be no more: and then, and not before, comes the resurrection, and the general judgment.

THE common translation is somewhat different. *As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down and riseth not, till the heavens be no more.*

THOUGH the comparison here expressed hath nothing to answer to it in the Hebrew, yet it must be owned, that the *caph* of similitude (as they call it) or the particle *como*, *as*, is sometimes understood; and therefore the passage may be so render'd, if there be occasion; and then the meaning will be this; that the death of man is not like the cutting down of a tree, which soon sprouts again, and flourishes in the same place; but rather, like the drying up of a river whose waters disappear, and we see no more of them. So man appears no more upon the stage of this world: *he lieth down and riseth not, till the heavens be no more.*

JOB proceeds; *Since this then is the lot of mankind, to die to all intents and purposes to the things of this world, and not to be raised again till the end of it, (verse. 13.) Oh that thou wouldest bid me in the grave, (Heb. in Sheól, the region of departed souls) that thou wouldest keep me secret till thy wrath be past; that thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me!*

As if he had said, 'Tired out with the calamities of life, let me then presently undergo this lot which must be undergone, the effect of Adam's sin, and of thy wrath against it; till the time appointed us to remain in this separate state be fulfilled; and then remember me, and raise me to that better state which thou hast prepared for thy faithful servants.'

AND

AND here he breaks out into an expression of joy and admiration.

VER. 14. *If a man die shall he live ? or, revive ? Is it true, that we shall rise again to a new and better life hereafter ? Let me with hope and patience wait this happy change, how long soever it may be in coming. All the days of my appointed time (or station, tzeba-i\*) will I wait till my change (Heb. chaliphath-i, my renovation) comes. It follows, ver. 15. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee, thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands. WHAT can this mean, but that God would call him forth to judgment ?*

\* תְּצִבָּה *tzeba-i, militia mea*, as some render it. The word indeed is commonly used in a military sense, either for an army or a state of warfare. But it is likewise used in a religious sense, if I may so term it. The angels which attend the throne of God are called *his tzeba*; and it is with respect to these, that he is so often called the God and Lord of Hosts, *tzebaoth*. The Levites, who attended the service of the tabernacle, are said to wait to do their office in this phrase, (Num. iv. 23) *Col ba-ba li-tzbo tzeba, every one that enters in to attend in his station, la-yabod yabodah be-obel moyed, to do the service in the tabernacle of the congregation, &c.* So we read of women *tzoboth*, attending at the door of the tabernacle, Exod. xxxviii. 8. and 1 Sam. ii. 22.

The word is used remarkably by the prophet Isaiah (Ch. xl. 2.) either to express the state of the Jews in the captivity of Babylon; waiting for the promised deliverance, or rather the state of the faithful, who expected a much more glorious redemption under the Messiah: for his harbinger is described in the following verse, (Ch. xl. 3.) *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, &c.* But the words of the prophet, ver. 1, 2, are these, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare (tzeba-ab) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.*

If Job had the same notion of a separate state, that Isaiah seems here to have either of the captivity of the Jews, under which they were to remain for a certain season, as a state brought upon them by their sins, till the day of their deliverance came, or of the state of the faithful waiting with hope and patience for the redemption of the Messiah; we see how aptly he uses the word *tzeba* here. The idea which the word conveys is that of a post or station given him by God to maintain, till released from it and called to a better state. As if he had said, 'Whatever station or condition God shall please to appoint me, either here, or in *Sheol*, the intermediate state; I shall still wait in earnest expectation of the future renovation or resurrection.

That



That he should then be admitted to answer for himself before a just and equitable judge, who knew the uprightness of his heart, and had a love for all his creatures that did not render themselves unworthy of it; and that then he should receive another sort of sentence than that which his rash ill-judging friends had passed upon him, and be acquitted before them and all the world? though now (as it follows in the next verse) God had seemed to deal so hardly with him, had *number'd all his steps, and sealed up his transgression and iniquity as in a bag*, (ver. 16, 17.) That is, had seemed to take account of every the smallest transgression of his life, and by the severe chastisements inflicted on him, had laid him open to the bitter censures and reproaches of his three friends. For his hopes of being acquitted in the day of judgment, could not entirely allay that grief and indignation he had conceived at the cruel usage given him by these men, who measured his guilt by his afflictions, and treated him upon this account in all their speeches as a wicked man and a hypocrite.

THIS (I think) is a fair account of the drift and purport of this chapter. And if I am right in explaining ver. 7, and 10. it appears, that Job's way of thinking upon this subject was not so different from St. Paul's, as the learned writer would persuade us.

THE reading of the Septuagint, understood by way of interrogation, (which is Rufinus's conjecture) favours the sense I have given of this passage. It is thus, For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down that it will sprout again. But man dieth—And is he no more? (*πρὸς τὸν δὲ ὅτι οὐκ ἔτι ἐστὶ;*) intimating, that it would be strange, if a tree should revive after it was cut down; but that man, a creature of such excellence, should die, and there was an utter end of him.

THIS kind of argument (I am sure) was much insisted on by the first apologists for christianity. And while

while the Heathen complained in such strains as these,  
*Soles occidere et redire possunt, &c.* \* ‘The sun  
 ‘sets, and rises again: but for us, when our short  
 ‘day expires, there remains one perpetual night of  
 ‘sleep.’ The Christians argued on the other hand,  
 that as the sun sets, and rises again; as the stars glide  
 away and return; the flowers die and revive; the  
 trees grown old and dead in winter, recover life again,  
 and bud and blossom in the spring: So *expectandum*  
*nobis etiam corporis ver est*, We too shall have our spring-  
 time of a resurrection. *Vide adeo, quam in solatium nostri*  
*resurrectionem futuram omnis natura meditetur*, says a  
 very elegant Christian writer †.

AND as this reasoning is natural and obvious, as  
 well as peculiarly fitted to shine in poetry, I see not  
 why Job, in this noble poem, may not be allowed to  
 reason in the same way.

BUT supposing the question, Where is he? to  
 mean, he is gone for ever. Yet still this can only be  
 understood of his never more returning back to this  
 world. For as to the future resurrection, I must in-  
 sist upon it, that Job declares his hope of it very  
 clearly at ver. 14. *All the days of my appointed time*  
*will I wait, till my change come.*

I KNOW it is a common opinion, that by the change  
 there mentioned, is meant the change of death.  
 But the other sense suits best with the context, as also  
 with the Hebrew word (חליפה) *chalipbah*, which pro-  
 perly signifies a change for the better, a renewal.

WHETHER this be owing to the force of the *Yod*  
 inserted as the third letter, they who are acquainted  
 with the delicacy of the Hebrew language will be  
 best able to determine. This is certain, that where  
 the same word is used for the change of death, (which  
 is only once, I think, in the whole bible) it is re-  
 markable, that we find the *Vau* put in the third place,  
 not the *Yod* or *I*. Thus Prov. xxxi. 8. those ap-

\* Catullus, Epigr. 5.

† Minucius Felix, p. 170, 171. Edit. Davies.



*pointed to destruction* (as our translation gives the sense) are in the Hebrew called, not *bené chaliphab*, but *bené chaloph*, sons of death.

It were easy to shew, from the other use of the word *chaliphab*, how properly it signifies that renovation which our religion teaches us to expect at the resurrection.

BUT having thus largely considered the text upon which the learned writer lays the greatest stress, and shewn it to be clearly against him; I suppose I need not be very particular in examining the other texts he points at; since the most that can be inferred from them is only this, that Job denies a resurrection of the body, or the man, to live again in this world.

THIS indeed, is what he often mentions, for it stuck very near to him; and seems to have raised his affliction to its utmost height; to reflect that should he die under those suspicions which his friends had entertained of him, there was no returning to redeem his character; the blemish must remain upon him to all succeeding generations.

THIS is evidently the meaning of that text referred to by the author, and which is, perhaps, the strongest to his purpose that can be found in Job's speeches, Chap. vii. 20, 21. where Job addresses himself to God in that passionate and moving strain; *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust, and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.*

As if he had said, ' Though I am no such wicked and ungodly wretch, as these men imagine me to be, (for thou knowest the uprightness of my heart) yet I acknowledge myself a sinner, and humble myself under thy afflicting hand; renouncing every fault and error I may have been guilty of, whether known or unknown. Let my repentance and confession then prevail with thee for pardon, and take away this heavy load of evils from me, and thereby  
' remove

‘ remove the cause of those suspicions which my friends  
 ‘ have entertained against me. For now, if I expire  
 ‘ under thy rod, their suspicions are confirmed, and  
 ‘ my character entirely stained beyond redress. And  
 ‘ shouldest thou seek me in the morning, (the usual  
 hour of judicature) ‘ to judge between me and my  
 ‘ friends, behold, I am not. The determination  
 ‘ comes too late. When I am dead and gone, there  
 ‘ will be no convincing them of the rashness of their  
 ‘ censures; which as they arose from the dreadful  
 ‘ evils which, they see me suffer, can only be re-  
 ‘ moved by a visible removal of those evils.’

HE must have entered very little into the spirit of this poem, who does not see how great a part of Job’s calamity the unjust suspicions of his friends were to him; and how he labours and turns himself every way to remove them, or to support himself under them.

AND now what is all this, or an hundred such passages, to be opposed to one plain proof of a resurrection, and a day of judgment, if any such is to be found in Job’s speeches? These seemingly opposite expressions, upon such a supposition, will not contradict, but only limit and explain each other. This is the candid and equitable interpretation due not only to the Scriptures, but to every book whatever; because otherwise, scarce any book can be so clearly written, but that it is possible, by a mistaken gloss, to turn it into a heap of contradiction.

IT is easy to observe, in almost all Job’s speeches, the struggle which he laboured under, betwixt an earnest desire of death, as a removal from a life of pain and misery; and a dread of it, as he must die in the ill opinion of his friends, and leave a blot and a reproach upon his memory, which he should never have the opportunity to wipe off again; for, after death, there was no returning. It is thus he complains in another of the places pointed at by the author.



CHAP. vii. 7.—O remember that my life is a breath; mine eye shall no more see good.

8. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.

9. The cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to Sheól shall come up no more.

10. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

11. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, &c.

CAN any one, that considers this passage with attention, see any thing in it that contradicts the doctrine of a future resurrection, and another state of life? I believe not. The expressions indeed are strong. *Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not* \*. *They that go down to Sheól shall come up no more.* But nevertheless the following verse shews the full importance of these phrases, that they mean just so much, and no more than this: *he shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.*

THE same is evidently the meaning of the two other texts referred to by the learned writer, viz. chap. x. 21. *Before I go whence I shall not return.* And chap. xvi. 22. *When a few years shall come, then shall I go the way whence I shall not return.*

I SUPPOSE it appears, from what has been said, that a return to this world is all that can reasonably be understood in either place. And it is remarkable, that, in both places, the words are introduced and occasioned by a reflection on the bitter usage given him by his friends. I need not shew it as to the latter text, for the thing is evident. But an inattention to it in the former passage, seems to have created a difficulty, which, by the vain attempts of the com-

\* *And I am not.* We find the same expression used by Homer's heroes of the dead: and yet no one questions their belief of a future state. Thus Telemachus says of his father Ulysses, *Od. d. 220.*

*Εἰ δὲ κε τεθνηὼς αἰχουω, μὴδ' ἐν ἑορτοῖς, &c.*

If I hear that he is dead, and no longer in being; why then I will celebrate his funeral, and let my mother marry whom she please.—

mentators

mentators to clear up, one would think were inextricable.

CHAP. x. 15, 16. is thus in our translation; *I am full of confusion, therefore see thou mine affliction, for it increaseth*: (Heb. ודאח עניי ויגאח) *thou huntest me as a fierce lion*; and again *thou shewest thyself marvellous unto me*.

HE that would see how much the commentators, Mercier, Cocceius, &c. and Schultens himself, who came after them all, are puzzled at this text, may consult Dr. Grey's note upon the place. The conjecture of that learned man in reading it, *Ca-shacal jig'eb*, instead of *ve-jig'eb ca-shacal*, is very ingenious had there been any occasion for the transposition. But I think there is none; and the passage may be very naturally thus read and translated. *Shebay kalon ve-roeb voni-i ve-jig'eb*: *Ca-shacal tetzud-emi*, &c. *Plenus ignominiae (sum) & spectator afflictionis meae vel superbit. Ut leonem venaris me*, &c. Which taking in what went before to shew the coherence, is thus: *If I be wicked, woe unto me: and if I be righteous, yet can I not lift up my head. I am full of ignominy; and those that are spectators of my affliction even pride themselves against me, and insult me. Thou huntest me as if I were a lion, and repeatest thy marvellous assaults upon me. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me: changes and war are against me*, &c\*. That is, in short, Thou sufferest my friends to attack and worry me in their turns, as the hunters usually do a stout lion—ὁπότε μιν δόλιον περὶ κύκλον ἄγωσι, (as old Homer gives us a hint of the sport†) when they surround him on all sides, and attack him one after another. For thus did Job's friends. *God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked—His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder‡*, as he complains elsewhere. I am persuaded we should be very sensible of the beauty and exactness of this comparison, had we lived in Job's days, and been with him at the hunting down of a lion.

\* Chap. x. 15, 16, 17. † Od. δ. 792. ‡ Ch. xvi. 11, 13.



I CAN see no objection to the construction here given, unless it be the repetition of the *vau* before *jig'eb*. But it is certain that the *vau* is sometimes redundant, as Num. xxiii. 3. *And whatsoever he sheweth me I will tell thee*, is in the Hebrew, *and whatsoever he sheweth me, and I will tell thee*, the *vau* repeated. But however, here (I think) it gives an emphasis to the expression; as if he had said, 'My friends, instead of being moved to compassion by seeing me in this miserable plight, on the contrary behave with haughtiness towards me; even pride themselves against me, and insult me.'

THIS was a thing so insupportable to him, that he proceeds, verse 18. addressing himself to God; *Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? I should have expired, and no eye had seen me.* That is, I should never have undergone the reproaches which I now suffer, nor would those spectators of my affliction have incurred the guilt of this their hard usage of me, verse 19. *I should have been as though I had never been*\*, carried directly from the womb to the grave. 20. *Are not my days few? Cease then.* The Hebrew is, *ba-lo meyat jam-ai jachdal? Will not the little of my days cease?* Is it not a very short time I

\* *As though I had never been.* Le Clerc's Note here is this. *Nondum notam immortalitatem animi tempore Jobi fuisse, hæc ut innumera alia clare ostendunt.* That, from hence, as from innumerable other places, it appears that the immortality of the soul was not known in Job's time. But what has the immortality of the soul to do with a dead embryo in the womb? *Abortivus censetur pro non nato*, I think I have heard, is a maxim in the law. He adds a quotation from Euripides, (*Troas*. v. 631, & seq.) where the poet makes Andromache say very oddly, *τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι τὸ θανεῖν ἴσον λέγει*, &c. That not to be born, and to die, is the same thing, &c. But this is not the only place where Euripides makes his Hero or Heroine speak out of character. And had he consulted Homer more, and his philosophy less, perhaps he would have put another sort of speech into the mouth of Hector's wife; and made her wish for death, that she might go to her husband in the other world. As Penelope does, (*Od.* γ. v. 80.) when tired out with the importunity and insolence of her suitors, she begs that Diana would to release her by a sudden death, that she might go to *Hades* and see Ulysses.

Ἡ ἐμὴ εὐπλοκαίμος βάλοι Ἀρτεμις, ὅφρ' Ὀδυσσεύς  
Ὀσσομένη, καὶ γαῖαν ὑπὸ συγγεῖν ἄφικοιμην.

have

have to live? *Let me alone that I may take comfort a little.* 21. *Before I go whence I shall not return, to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death.* 22. *A land of darkness as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness.* A gloomy prospect indeed! Whether of the grave mentioned, verse 19. or of the invisible state, described (no doubt) in such a mournful strain, to move, if possible, the compassion of his friends.

BUT thus much for the texts where Job is supposed to speak of the irrecoverable dissolution of the body: which I take for granted are the strongest that could be produced to this purpose; and which therefore, I have been the larger in endeavouring to clear up; that so I might, if possible, remove every obstacle or prejudice that lies in the way to a right understanding of the great text in question; which shall be particularly considered and explained in the following section.

## S E C T. V.

HAVING thus far cleared the way, by removing the objections brought by the learned writer against the common interpretation of this famous text; I shall now proceed to consider the text itself: And first, to give an exact and literal translation of it; then to settle the meaning of the words, and to express their full sense in a short paraphrase.

THE translation I shall give as literally as possible, without altering even the order of the words; though in one place they are a little transposed, as is common in poetry.

It runs thus: *I know my vindicator living, and at the last over the dust he shall arise.*

*And after my skin (they) have destroyed this, also from my flesh I shall see God: Whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, or a stranger.*



THE Hebrew Verb translated *shall behold*, is ראו *rau*, the *præterit*; that is, strictly, *have* beheld. This change of tense is very common in the Hebrew, and therefore commentators take no notice of it here; and the generality of them seem to look upon it as a mere arbitrary thing, which they are no way concerned to account for. But surely there must be some fixed rules for these conversions, or the language would be all confusion. In the present case, I apprehend, the change is made by the force of the *Vau* conversive, which sometimes operates at a distance\*, and here turns

\* That the *Vau*, when joined to the verb, often changes the future into a *præterit*, and the *præterit* into a future, is a well-known rule with the grammarians; But that it should have the same force when separated from the verb by a word or two coming between, is what I have not seen observed; and therefore take the following examples of it,

1 Sam. ii. 16. *Nay, but thou shalt give it me now, ve-im lo lakachti be-chozka, and if not, I will take it by force.* Where *lakachti* the *præterit* is turned into a future, in the same manner as if the *Vau* had been joined to it, though *im lo* comes between.

So Isai. xlix. 5. *And my God shall be my strength, Ve-Eloha-i hajab buzz-i*; where *hajab* the *præterit* is turned into a future by the *Vau*, though *Eloha-i* come between. The examples of futures turned into *præterits* are still more common. Thus,

Pf. lxxi. 17. *O God, thou hast taught me from my youth up, ופלאתיך ויך ויך ויך, ve-Yad hennab aggid niplothea, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.* Where the *Yad hennab*, hitherto, shews plainly, that the verb *aggid*, though future, must have a retrospect, and be understood as a *præterit*; and this can be owing to nothing but the force of the *Vau* preceding it, though at a distance.

So Prov. iv. 17. *For they eat (or have eaten, lachamu) the bread of wickedness, ve-jen chaviasim-jishu, and drank the wine of violence.* It is plain the future *jishu* here must be turn'd into a *præterit* by the force of the *Vau*, though two words come between. And so, exactly in the same phrase, Amos v. 10. *They hate (והבו, have hated) him that reproveth in the gate, vedober tamim jethayebu, and have abhorred him that speaketh uprightly.*

The book of Job abounds with instances of this kind. Thus Chap. xxix. 9. *The Princes refrained talking, ve-kash jashnu (Future) lo-yiben, and put their hand to their mouth.*

So verse 19, 20, twice.—*My root was spread out by the waters; ve-tal jalin bik-kesfiri, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me; ve-kashti be-jad-i tachaliph, and my bow was renewed in my hand.* Where *jalin* and *tachaliph*, futures, are converted

turns *rau* into a future, though the nominative come between. And as none of the grammarians or philologists, that I have seen, take notice of this remarkable particular, I shall give a few examples of it, (and

verted into præterits by the preceding *Vau*, though other words of the sentence come between.

I shall give one example more from this book of Job, because *Sol. Glassius*, in his *Philologia Sacra*, (see *Glassii Philologia Sac. Lib. 3. Tract. 3. Can. 49. p. 365.*) (one of the most useful books of the kind that are extant) has produced the passage, and attempted to account for it in another way; but (I think) has clearly missed the mark. It is in chapter the ivth, where Eliphaz is describing a night-vision which he had.

Verse 14. *Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

15. *Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up.*

16. *It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice.*

It is remarkable, that the verbs in the 14th verse are præterits, viz. *karani* and *hiphkid*. But those in the two following verses, (though the same narration is continued of a thing past) are all futures. *Ve ruach Yal pana-i jachloph, tesammer jabarath besar-i, jayamod ve-lo accir mare-bu, &c.*

Now the reason, which this learned Grammarian gives for it, is only this; *Aliquot futuri temporis verba pro præteritis ponuntur, cum ver. 14. præteritum præcesserit*— that ‘in the fifteenth and sixteenth verses some futures are put for præterits, because a præterit went before at verse 14.

But what reason can there be in this? Does a præterit going before always change the future that follows into a præterit? Or does it do it often, so as to make a rule of it? There is a rule, I think, or at least a practice, very common, whereby futures follow futures, and præterits præterits; by what they call *ᾠδὴ*, or an *Ellipsis* of the copulative: but no rule, that I can perceive, for a future to be made a præterit, because a præterit goes before it.

Had this learned man therefore endeavoured to account for a thing he did not comprehend the reason of, by saying that Eliphaz was in a fright at the remembrance of his vision, and that this might render his language a little confused; he had said something plausible, though not entirely satisfactory: for even the seeming irregularities and confusions in a good poem have always something regular in them.

But, in short, here we shall see the use and certainty of the observation I have been making, of the force of the *Vau* to operate at a distance. For it is evidently the *Vau* before *ruach*, that changes the first future *jachloph* into a præterit, verse 15. The two following futures, *tesammer* and *jayamod*, are put in the same sense with *jachloph* by the *asyndeton* above mentioned, or the copulative being under-



(and many more might be collected) in the note below.

This clause then is very rightly translated, *whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold.*

understood, though not expressed; and then comes the *Vau* again which changes the last verb *accir* into a præterit, *ve-so accir marebu*. And just after we have another instance of the same kind, *ve-hol ess-may*, (future) and I heard a voice.

I ought, perhaps, to make some excuse to the common reader for the length of this note. But I could not refrain enlarging a little upon the point, as in tumbling over the commentators, I have been often scandalized at their inattention to the genius of the Hebrew, and rendering the præterits as futures, and futures as præterits, without any rule or reason. Le Clerc amongst the rest; who makes no scruple to say, *passim in hoc libro tempora hæc miscentur*—that in this book of Job, the futures and præterits are often used promiscuously. But he was not aware of the reasons of many of these changes.

No, nor yet the learned A. Schultens, as I see by his note on the word *vau* in this text of Job: for he is in the same mistake with Glassius in his way of accounting for this idiom of the Hebrew. *Præteritum*, says he, (note on Job xix. 26.) *præmissis futuro, ejusdem potestatem plerumque sequitur*. A præterit is most commonly to be understood as a future; when a future goes before. But he is very unfortunate in the two examples produced in support of his notion, viz. Job v. 16, and again, ver. 20. For in the first instance, viz. *ve-yolathab kapetzab pi-ba*, and iniquity shall stop her mouth, *kapetzab* is turned into a future, not by the future *rebi* in the foregoing clause of the verse; but by the *Vau* before *volathab*. And for the other instance, ver. 20, of the same chapter, *be-rayah padeca mim-maveih*, In famine he shall redeem thee from death. Where he would have *pad-ec* to signify as a future, because some futures go before; there is no necessity at all for this, if we only read *pad-ec*, *redemptor tuus*, instead of *pad-ec* *redimet te*, which is done without any change at all of the letters, or text, and therefore is very allowable; nay I think, it gives a more elegant turn to the sentence, by thus varying the phrase.

I shall conclude this note with observing, that probably the Masoretical rule about the different pointing of the *Vau* when conversive, hinder'd men from looking further, and finding out this property of it I have been mentioning. But why it should not have the same force when separated from the verb, as when joined to it, in the same clause of a sentence; what reason can be given? The poets, at least, it is but natural to think, would take this privilege to themselves, who have so great privileges allowed them in other respects, and particularly in transposing the order of words,

THE word render'd, in the Bible translation, *my Redeemer* \*, signifies equally a vindicator, avenger, or deliverer; and is the same that is used for the avenger of blood so often spoken of in the books of Moses; who was some near kinsman or friend of the deceased, that by the law was allowed to take immediate vengeance on the person guilty of the homicide, unless he fled to a city of refuge. Nor was this peculiar to the law of Moses, but seems to have been a custom that obtained universally in those ancient times †. The word therefore is particularly apposite to Job's purpose, as it signifies one that vindicates the injuries of his friend, and does him justice after death. And moreover in this view, it does not imply any necessity that this holy man should be acquainted with the whole mystery of our redemption, which is the great difficulty learned men object to the received interpretation of this passage. What knowledge Job might have of this matter, or the men of that age, conveyed down to them by tradition, is a point we have no need to enquire into at present. It is sufficient to my purpose, to understand the word here used in its plain and proper signification, that of Vindicator.

\* *לְבַדְּךָ גֹאֵלִי.*

† It obtained, at least, over all the ancient states of Greece, that if any one killed another, though by accident, he was forced to fly his country: otherwise he was in danger of falling a sacrifice to the resentment of the friends and relatives of the deceased; who are called by Homer, upon this occasion, *ἀποσπῆρες*, which might well enough be render'd Avengers of blood; for it seems to answer exactly to the Hebrew word *לְבַדְּךָ גֹאֵלִי*. And we have the custom intimated to us Odyss. v. 118.

*Καὶ γὰρ τίς ἔστι φῶτα κατασπῆρες ἐν δόμῳ;*

*Ὡ μὲν πολλοὶ ἴασι ἀποσπῆρες ἐπὶ οἴκῳ;*

*Θεοῦ, αἷος, τὴν προλήπῃ καὶ παλεῖδα γαῖαν;*

So Achilles calls himself the *ἀποσπῆρες*, (that is, *Goal*) of Patroclus, when he killed Hector, II. x. 333.

*Νῆπις, τοῖο δ' ἀνέθευ ἀποσπῆρες μὲν ἀμείνων*

*Νηυσὶν ἐνὶ γλαφυρῇσιν ἔην μέλεισθε δαδείκεται.*

So Zimri (1 Kings 16. 11) slew the house of Baasha *וְלִבְנֵי וְגֹאֲלָיו*, *et ἀποσπῆρας αὐτοῦ*— and all those who were concerned to avenge his death—

THE



THE next clause, *and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*, according to our translation, is in the Hebrew literally, as I have render'd it, *and at last over the dust he shall arise*—— Over the *dust*, that is, those who are reduced to dust, the dead—— This is a very easy metonymy in the eastern poetry; and we have an example of it, Psalm xxx. 9. *What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee?* that is, Shall the dead praise thee? The same word (עָפָר *yaphar*) and the same beautiful figure as here.

MOREOVER there seems to be a peculiar elegance and significancy in the use of the word in this passage, as it brings to mind the sentence pass'd upon Adam, *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*; from which sentence the good and just are now to be deliver'd, and therefore the day of the *Resurrection* is called in Scripture the day of their *Redemption*.

THE other word עָמַד *jakúm*, render'd by the translators *he shall stand*, signifies properly, *he shall arise, or stand up*. That is, he shall stand up to give sentence, or to execute judgment. It can scarce have any other meaning; and I believe this was the posture in which judges usually deliver'd their sentence, in all times and countries.

THE phrase of God's arising to judgment is very usual in the Scriptures. Psalm lxxiv. 22. *Arise, O God, plead thine own cause*. So Psalm lxxxii. 8. *Arise, O God, judge the earth, &c.* But there is a passage very remarkable to our purpose in this book of Job; I mean, Ch. xxxi. 13, 14. *If I did despise the cause of my man servant, or of my maid servant, when they contended with me: What then shall I do when God riseth up? And when he visiteth, What shall I answer him? When God riseth up, jakúm*, the very word used here, and used, we see, exactly in the same sense, viz. when God shall arise to judgment.

THE next verse in the Bible translation runs thus—*And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.*

HERE

HERE are three words supplied, to fill out the sense; for in the Hebrew there is neither *though*, nor *worms*, nor *body*. The first and last however are rightly added. But as for the second, *worms*, there is no need of it: *They have destroyed this*, being in the Hebrew idiom the same with, *This be destroyed* \*.

AND by *This*, must be meant *this body*. For there is plainly something wanting to fill up the sense; and there is no other word, that we can think of, so proper as this.

INSTEAD of *though* and *yet*, as it is in the translation, the Hebrew has only two *Vaus*, which signify *and*, or *also*. But as the Hebrew language does not abound with particles, and they were forced to use the same particle many different ways, the meaning is undoubtedly the same with that expressed in the translation.

I SHALL observe but one thing more, and this for the sake of those delicate understandings, who may think the word *flesh* gives us too gross an image of the resurrection-body, viz. that the Hebrew phrase is not *in*, but *from* my flesh I shall see God. Which Vatablus, a judicious commentator, takes to mean, *from* or *after* my flesh thus consumed and destroyed.

WE have seen then (I think) all that is necessary to a right understanding of the passage before us. And therefore I shall now venture to express the sense of Job in a short paraphrase, taking in a few verses that precede this famous text.

\* So Job xxxiv. 20. *The mighty shall be taken away without hand*, is in the Hebrew, *they shall take away the mighty*, &c. So Luke xii. 20. *This night thy soul shall be required of thee*, is in the Greek, (which sometimes imitates the Hebrew phrase) *την ψυχην σου απαιτησου*, &c.

I believe this way of speaking was common in the other oriental tongues, as well as the Hebrew. We have a remarkable instance of it in the Persian, according to Dr. Hyde's translation of the book, *Sad-der*. (Porta, or Chap. 5.) where *animam ejus ferent ad paradysum*, is used for *anima ejus feretur*, &c. This I guess, because the learned editor has added the word [*Angeli*] inclosed in crochets to shew it was an addition, to fill up the sense—



VERSE 21. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me.*

22. *Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?*

23. *Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book!*

24. *That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!*

25. *For I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c.*

As if he had said thus;

HAVE pity on me, O ye my friends, if you are really such, have pity on me: for the afflicting hand of God is sufficient, without your unkindness, to weigh me down.

AND why should you persecute me as God, or claim to yourselves a prerogative like him, to know the very secrets of my heart? Are the miseries you see me suffer in my flesh too little to satisfy you, that you are resolved to pierce my very soul with your unjust reproaches?

HEAR then, ye rash accusers of my innocence, hear this resolute confession of my faith.

AND Oh that my words were now written in a book! Or rather, that they were graven on a rock, with an impression strong and deep, so as to remain upon record to all future ages!

FOR I know, the Vindicator of my innocence and reputation, which you have thus inhumanely attacked, now liveth, and shall live for ever; and that in some grand future period he shall arise to judge the dead.

AND though after my skin, which you see so miserably affected, this whole frame shall be dissolved and turned to dust; yet I believe that I shall live again hereafter, as truly and certainly as I do now, and shall appear personally before my judge.

WHOM I shall see for myself\*, or in my own cause, prepared to do me justice; and conscious of

\* See Job v. 27. Know thou it *for thyself*—— So it is in the Hebrew—— which our translators have well render'd by way of explication, Know thou it *for thy good*——

my innocence shall look up to him with joy and hope; whilst others, my accusers, unable to behold him, shall look down with shame and confusion.

THIS is as clear, and as exact a paraphrase of the words, as I can give them.

FOR I suppose Job, by the word *ו*, *zar*, or *stranger*, artfully to point at his mistaken friends and accusers; who, as he intimates, would be struck with shame and remorse in the day of judgment, and not be able to bear the sight of that judge, whom he himself should behold with pleasure——

THIS gives an easy sense of the words, and (if I mistake not) a beautiful one——

OR supposing that by *zar*, a *stranger*, be meant in general one who is estranged from God and goodness, (for the word is often used in a bad sense) this will likewise render the passage easy.

BUT now, let us consider the other interpretation a little, and see how it will stand with the text.

SUPPOSING then that Job here spoke of a *temporal deliverance*, and that this were to be understood by the phrase of *seeing God*, (which, by the way, is but a harsh construction) yet what has the word *ו*, *zar*, to do here? *I know that I myself shall be delivered, and not another, or a stranger*—— What sense is there in this?

It is as difficult to reconcile the other parts of the text to that sense.

I HAVE already taken notice of the strange oversight of bishop Patrick, who admits the construction followed by our translators, *though after my skin worms destroy this body*; and yet supposes it possible for Job to outlive this destruction, and be restored to his former happy state.

OTHERS, to avoid this error, would turn the words thus— *Though after my skin they have destroyed this,—— that is, though after they have destroyed this my skin, yet in my flesh I shall see God*—— But beside the unnatural force upon the words, What sense can there be in this? *After my skin is destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God*—— What! In his flesh without a skin? What a monster would they make of poor Job!

THE



THE learned Grotius was aware, that the words would admit no other construction, than that usually put upon them : but then he has a refined conceit, which may shew us what lengths these great men will sometimes go, to maintain an error they have once espoused. He allows of the construction, (as I have said) viz. that after the skin something is destroyed : but he was resolved not to go much deeper than the skin ; and therefore says, we must understand it of the fat that is beneath the skin—— *nempe arvinam quæ sub pelle est.* Grot. in loc.

BUT first, he should have consider'd, whether Job, at this time, had any fat left to boast of. He had already been made to possess months of vanity, as he tells us himself, Chap. vii. 3. And I suppose, a few months of such watchings and pains, as he elegantly describes in the following verses, must have wasted him sufficiently, had he been fat and plump before. Nay, this is what we learn to have been the case, from more places than one—— In the xvth Chapter, where he complains heavily of the conduct of his friends, that, instead of pitying his deplorable condition, they should urge it as an argument of his guilt ; he expresses it thus, addressing himself to God— *Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which are a witness against me ; and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face :* that is, My friends reproach me with it, as if it were a proof of my being wicked. And in the next Chapter, he says, that he was become a mere shadow of a man, as bishop Patrick rightly renders it, *Mine eyes also are dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow,* (Chap. xvii. 7.) Nay, in this very Chapter, just before he makes his solemn protestation, he says, ver. 20. *My bone cleaveth to my skin, and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.*

AFTER all this, who can make sense of Grotius's interpretation, *Though diseases should not only consume my skin, but this fat, yet in my flesh I shall see God*—— But where could he find in that skeleton body of his the least lump of fat to point at.

FOR

FOR this, by the way, seems to be the ground or reason of that omission in the text. And when Job says, *after my skin they destroy this*—— we must suppose him to strike his breast, or to use some other action, that might point out what was wanting to fill up the sense, viz. *this mortal frame, this body*—— This (I think) the Greeks called expressing a thing *δεικνύειν*—— But what action he could use to denote the fat that lay under the skin, (supposing there was any there) it is difficult to conceive. Beside that there is no instance of such an omission, as this which Grotius contends for, to be met with in the book of Job, or perhaps any other book in the world. But for the omission of the word *body*, he himself admits and contends for it in his comment on Chap. xiii. 28. where he translates the Hebrew thus, *Ut vestimentum comedet hoc tinea*—— and adds, *Hoc cum dicit, corpus suum monstrat, when he says This, he points at his body*, says this learned commentator. And how then could he suppose that any thing else was meant in the passage before us? Nay he there confirms his notion with a remarkable quotation from Tertullian, who upon that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. *This corruptible must put on incorruption*, supposes that the apostle, when he said this, pointed at his body or flesh—— *tenens utique carnem dicebat apostolus, &c. (adv. Marcion. 5.)* which is another example on our side.

I NEEDED not have been so large, perhaps, in considering this strange conceit of Grotius; but that some respect is due even to the reveries of so great a man. And therefore I must not yet have done with him.

THERE is another clause of the text, which they, who espouse the notion of a *temporal deliverance*, find it very difficult to explain, viz. that which our translators, a little wide of the Hebrew, render, *He shall stand upon the earth*; but Grotius, much more widely, interprets, *He shall keep the field*, as conquerors are used to do: he shall get the victory over my enemies——

(Postre-



(*Postremum in campo stare, est victoris—Sic Deum dicit victorem fore adversariorum meorum.*)

BUT neither does *בַּיַּבְבָּר* signify a field, much less a field of battle; nor *וַיַּקְלִים* so properly, he shall stand, as he shall arise\* or stand up. And if words are to be thus turned at pleasure from their natural meaning, what certainty can there be in language?

LASTLY, Neither will a *temporal deliverance* at all agree with the solemn preface, with which this text is introduced, *viz. Ob that my words were written in a book! that they were graven on a rock to remain for ever!*

TAKE the passage in its true light, as an appeal to a future judgment, and every thing is apt and proper.

I wish this protestation of my innocence, which I am now about to make, together with this my solemn appeal to the general judgment for the truth of it, were engraven on a rock, to remain, if possible, for ever; that so you and all mankind might thereby be inclined to think me innocent; or, at least, to suspend your hard censures of me till that great day.

BUT if he had been only going to express his hope of a *temporal deliverance*; What occasion could there be to wish it engraven on a rock? One would think the leaves, on which the Sibyl wrote her oracles†, and which were scattered with the next breath of wind, would have served almost as well. For if he hoped for a *temporal deliverance* at all, it must be for a very sudden one. By the account he gives of himself, it was come to the last extremity with him; so that he could not possibly think the change far off, whether for death or a deliverance. But as the last required a miracle, in a manner, to effect it; I am persuaded, he would never put the proof of his innocence upon so desperate a hazard, unless he had some extraordinary

\* The proper word for stand, is *yamad*; and this verb and *וַיַּקְלִים* are remarkably joined together, Job xxix. 8. *V-ijbipim kamu, yamadu—The aged arose, and stood—*

† Virg. *Æn.* 3. 448.

revelation to assure him of it, of which there is not the least hint in any part of the book.

So, that to understand this passage of a *temporal deliverance*, is neither consistent with the plain sense of the words, nor reconcileable with the context, nor agreeable with the tenour of the argument, or the general drift of Job's speeches. On the contrary, the other sense suits well with all. It is the most natural interpretation of the words; agrees best with the solemn preface that introduces them, and is exactly correspondent with the principal design of Job in this and all his other speeches, which is to convince his friends, if possible, of his innocence, and the rashness of their censures and suspicions of him.

To this purpose we find him, in the heat of the debate, often wishing with eagerness to appear before his judge. Thus Ch. xiii. 3. *Surely I would speak to the Almighty. I desire to reason with God.* And because he had little hopes that God would appear as a visible judge here, to determine the dispute betwixt him and his friends, he challenges them before the other tribunal in that remarkable passage, which I have already quoted, Chap. xiii. 18. — *Behold now, I have ordered my cause, &c.*

Upon their still persisting to urge their suspicions of him, he wishes again for a tryal, Ch. xvii. 21. *O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!*

And because he found himself quite spent, and drawing near, as he supposed, to his end, he begs that God would even now, if possible, bring him to his tryal, and convince his rash accusers of their folly and mistake, Chap. xvii. 3, 4. *Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee, who is he that will strike hands with me? For thou hast bid their hearts from understanding.*

The several images here brought together, and borrowed from the courts of judicature, as *laying down a caution, putting in a surety, striking hands, &c.* are not only a beauty in the poetry, but shew the earnestness of



his desire to appear before his judge, and take his trial.

IV T O H E  
 WHEN all this would not do, but they still disbelieve and persecute him, he makes that solemn declaration in the passage before us, of his faith and hope in a resurrection, and a day of general judgment, when he was confident his innocence would be made appear.

Now this may be looked on as an oath of purgation, or the highest assurance he could possibly give them, that he was free from all such crimes as they suspected him of. And we have seen the several steps, by which he arrives at this point; that the gradation is natural, and every thing in this view coherent.

In short, the strongest argument (shall I call it?) against our exposition of this passage, (but I think it amounts to no more than a very slight presumption, though great stress has been laid upon it) is that of the learned Grotius, that the Jewish interpreters do not understand this passage of a resurrection.

But must we follow blindly those blind guides for the sense of holy Scriptures? The question is, What the true sense of the words is, or how they may be most naturally explained? And this, I believe, would scarce admit of a dispute, had not learned men taken up a prejudiced notion, that the doctrine of the resurrection was not known or believed in Job's time; and so they wrest and torture this text, to make it speak another sense. Whereas they ought rather, from the passage before us, to have concluded the other way, viz. that the doctrine was then, (by those, at least, who worshipped the true God, and had preserved the primitive doctrines that were delivered down) well known, and believed.

But what weight there is in this objection of the learned Grotius; and how little the authority of the Jewish Rabbins is to be regarded in the case before us, shall be shewn in a following section.

S E C T. VI.

**I**F I was to make out a list of the errors learned from men have fallen into, who have espoused the other side of the question; it might perhaps contribute to the easier admission of that sense which I contend for of this celebrated passage.

It is at suffice to give a sample only from two of the most eminent writers in that way, Le Clerc amongst the christian commentators; and Maimonides among the Jewish Rabbins.

The blunders of Le Clerc, in his comment upon this text, are (I think) plain and palpable.

He supposes the phrase of God's standing upon the earth, or the dust, to mean the same as was expressed before, viz. his being living. And this was expressed in Latin, *quia homines, qui stant in pulvere, vivunt; opponitur enim is qui in pulvere testis sunt, atque in sepulchro jacent.*

If I had not given his own words, perhaps I should scarce be credited that any one could reason thus. *A man that stands upon the dust, is alive (to be sure) for he is not buried in the dust; therefore when it is said of the Deity, that he shall stand upon the dust, the consequence is clear.*

As for the phrase of seeing God, he understands it of Job's hope of seeing him in that miraculous way, in which he appeared at last to put an end to the debate. Whereas most of the critics (I believe) who have gone before him, have thought, that this miraculous appearance was a very surprizing and unexpected thing, both to Job and his friends. And he himself allows, that Job must have had some revelation of the thing before-hand, or he could never have entertained any such hope.

*Et e carne mea. Vivens Deum videbo, ut, nempe, post mortis suae, quemadmodum postea Deum e nube loquentem vidit; conspectus praesentiae ejus symbolo, ut est lux corusca, in qua Moysi se conspicuum praebeuit. Sperabat ergo Jobus, (e revelatione, si res historice capienda) fore ut Deus sese ei conspicuum praeberet, &c.*



FURTHER he supposes, that this sight of God must of necessity imply a deliverance from his calamities. For God (says he) never reveals himself in this manner to any, but to his singular favourites, such as Moses &c.

ACCORDING to this rule then, the three friends must be singular favourites too; for it is plain, that God revealed himself to them, and they had the honour of his commands—— But it was to do a thing, which shewed them at the same time to be out of his favour till they had done it.

MOREOVER, this sagacious commentator did not recollect, with what terror, for the most part, even good men received these extraordinary manifestations of the Deity under the Old Testament. For though in the other life, they believed there was fulness of joy in his presence; yet, in this frail and sinful state, they thought themselves too weak to bear it, and seem to wonder that any mortal could see his face and live. Gen. xxxii. 30. Jud. vii. 22. and elsewhere.

ON Verse 26. *Yet in my flesh I shall see God*—— he says, They who interpret this of a resurrection, add many things of their own to make out the sense, as for example, "When, my skin being putrified, worms shall have gnawed this carcase, God shall recall me to life, that I may see him; which shall be done at the Last Day."

BUT there is no need of adding any thing to the text, but what must necessarily be understood, and what he himself hath added to it, viz. that by *this* is meant *this body*. (Vocula 20th, says he, *corpus designat*) For with this little addition, it will run thus—*And after my skin they have destroyed this body, also from my flesh* (or after my flesh, or out of my flesh;

*Cum autem ait se visurum Deum, satis aperta significatio est, Deum calamitatibus suis liberatum iri: neque enim Deus se unquam conspicuum præbuit, quatenus hoc licet per ejus naturam, nisi in quibus singulari ratione favit, ut Mosi.*

*Hæc de resurrectione qui interpretantur, multa de suo admittuntur, qualia sunt, Cum putrefacta cute, vermes cadaver meum roserint; Deus me in vitam revocabit, ut eam videam; quod ultimo demum die fieri poterit.*

the preposition is used in all these senses,) *I shall see God.*

Now if this sight of God is to be after the flesh, or the body is destroyed, it must be in another state of life. Or if from the flesh mean in the flesh, or in the body, the words are still more express for a resurrection; and then the *word*, at the last, here added, must signify, that this is to be done *ultimo demand die*, to use his own words.

LASTLY, he understands the repetition, *I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold*, as intended by Job to express more clearly and emphatically the certainty of his hope or expectation of a temporal deliverance. Nay he owns, that Job must have had some revelation for the ground of this so certain hope of his, if the thing is to be taken historically. And yet confesses at the same time, that Job, in his speeches, both before and after this, *propemodum desperasse, in a manner despaired of any such deliverance*.

A strange revelation indeed! that could beget in the breast of him that was inspired with it no stronger, or more settled hope.

But this (says he) is the struggle betwixt reason and the passions, from whence it comes to pass, that men sometimes speak what agrees with reason, and sometimes what suits their passions, according as the one or the other prevails.

Such a solution as this may be easily opposed to all the absurdities and inconsistencies that can possibly be objected. For what argument can be drawn from the absurdity of a thing, which may not be thus answered or evaded, by saying, that men are absurd and inconsistent?

† *Uti clarius & imparitius legimus, Jobus se certo sperare liberatum iri ostendit.*

† *Sperabat ergo Jobus, se revelatione, si res historice capiendae fore ut Deus sese et conspiciendum praeberet, quamvis graviore morbo aut vulnere laborans, antequam moreretur.*

† See his note on verse 27.

† *Sed haec est pugna rationis & affectuum, qua fit, ut homines, praeterutrinis viribus, nunc convenientia rationis, nunc affectibus consentanea loquantur.* Note on verse 27.



sistent? Whereas, if a consistent sense can be found, the contrary (one would think) ought always to be supposed, *viz.* that a writer, or speaker, is consistent with himself.

But what could induce this learned critic thus to trifle, rather than to admit that Job here speaks of a resurrection? Why in the first place, he takes it for granted, that the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state was not known in Job's days: and upon this presumption, calls up all his skill in criticism to turn this passage and many others, to a wrong sense.

In the next place, he mistakes the main question in debate betwixt these friends; overlooks the proper subject of their dispute, *viz.* Whether Job were a righteous or a wicked man? and fancies to himself a sort of problem in divinity or morality to be laid down and regularly discussed between them. And from this wrong notion draws as wrong conclusions.

The question handled in this book, (says he) is, why those who are not worse than others, who are esteemed good men, and are really such, are sometimes overwhelmed with unusual calamities; which how it can suit with the divine justice, neither Job, nor his friends can conceive; nor does God himself teach, when at last he speaks to Job. A strange question indeed, which no one could, or would determine. One would think, the academical way of disputing had taken its prigne from hence.

But having thus put a question of his own invention, he argues from it thus. The solution of this problem, and the only consolation proper to quiet the mind of Job, must be fetched from the doctrine of another life.

If Job's friends there-  
fore  
Queritur in eo (libro) cur qui non sunt deteriores aliis, qui boni habentur & recti sunt, interdum inusitatis calamitatibus premantur; quod quomodo consentire queat cum iustitia divina, nec Jobus nec amici possunt comminisci; imo nec Deus ipse, ubi Jobum postea alloquitur, docet. — On Ver. 27. p. 83. Col. 2.

† Nimirum solutio problematis, & una consolatio, qua Jobi animus pacari poterat, peti debuit ex alterius vite cognitione. Quam si evif-  
sent

fore had known any thing of the matter, they would have forbid him to lament thus, for that there was another state to be expected after this life, where virtue was to be rewarded—— Job would have likewise taken this comfort to himself, and not have given such a loose to his passions. But if these had quite forgot this topic of consolation, the Deity would certainly have urged it, (had the thing been as yet revealed) and have admonished Job, that it was his pleasure thus to try him, by inflicting these calamities upon him, that his virtue might be the more confirmed, and others in the like circumstances might be induced to imitate it; nor had he reason to upbraid him with any hardship or injustice done him, since it was his purpose to recompence his sufferings and constancy with great and everlasting rewards. Such a speech, says He, (had the thing been then, or before that time, revealed by God) was much more suitable to his great wisdom, than the mention of the creation of the crocodile and hippopotamus, and other things of that kind, which might terrify Job with a dread of the divine power, but could scarce afford him any consolation. It would himself God does not conceive, nor his friends can conceive.

sent Job's friends, decesserunt cum iusto, adeo perturbati et lamentari, esse enim dixissent aliud tempus gratiarum actionis, idque expectari, ob ea debere, post hanc vitam mortalem; Et eo maiora premia velaturum, quo grauioribus calamitatibus constantius tulisset. Quibus premiis mala eius vitæ Deus abunde esse postulat. Jobus ipse deo ad agendum provocasset, nec ulla eade esset. Quod si talia coram mentem non fuissent, Deus certe si res jam revelata erat, dixisset, monuisseque Jobum, sibi visum fuisse, tot malis ejus virtutem explorare; ut magis in eo ipse firmaretur, atque cum imitarentur, quibus similibus contingere; nec solum Jobus solus, sed et populum, dissolutum, depravatum, se ipsum non propter singularia peccata passum esse cum sanctis. Et ipse sub his malis opprimi, sed ut ejus virtus magis eniteret, exemploque aliis esset, ceterum effecturum se ne hominem constantia sua periret, æternis et æquius in eum collatis premiis. Quæ oratio si rem jam tum patefecisset Deus, multo magis sanctis, sapientia et concordantibus erat, quam creatio Crocodili et Hippopotami, utique in genus, quæ Jobum quidem terrore potuerunt, Divitiis, potentia, mæ, sed solari, vi, potuerunt.



ALL this, we see, supposes the question here debated to be what it was not. Remove but this foundation, and the whole must totter with it.

Now it will appear plain to any one that reads this book with care, that the main point, debated betwixt these friends, was, whether Job was an upright and religious man, or, on the contrary, a wicked man and a hypocrite. And this very naturally brought on another question, not why good men are afflicted, (as Le Clerc has wrongly put it) but whether they are so, or not?—Or, whether it was usual with God to afflict, in so extraordinary a manner, as they saw Job afflicted, but for sins of an extraordinary size.

THIS then being the truth of the case, it is easy to observe, that the doctrine of a resurrection and a future state, supposing they had received an obscure tradition of it (as it is evident to me they had) will afford no solution to either of these questions. The friends might still judge rashly of poor Job, (as, we know, some Christians do of one another, with as little reason, notwithstanding they believe a life to come :) and then there could be no room for their urging this doctrine to him by way of consolation; for it can be only such to good men, and he, in their opinion, was quite otherwise. Job indeed might take some consolation to himself from it; and it appears that he does so in more places than one. Nevertheless, if we suppose him to have any feeling in him, he could not but be highly provoked at the ill treatment and unjust suspicions of his friends. He could not but reflect with wonder and surprise on the astonishing calamities that had befallen him—Nay, he might and would (if we allow him to have any share of human infirmity) expostulate with God upon the reasons of those severe inflictions, which is what Le Clerc miscalls upbraiding him with hardness and almost injustice.—He might and would, no doubt,

*Non esse car sibi duritiam & propemodum injustitiam improbrare*

know

often

often call upon God, as he does, to judge betwixt him and his friends—Nay, he might affirm in the most solemn manner his belief, and expectation of a future judgment, and yet not be able to convince them of his innocence, or freedom from those secret crimes of which they had suspected him.

So that in this view, the whole appears consistent; and we see nothing in the behaviour of Job or his friends, but what may be easily accounted for, though we suppose them to be well acquainted with the doctrine of the resurrection.

LASTLY, Had God been pleased to mention this doctrine in his speech, What solution could this have afforded to the question in debate, whether Job were a righteous or a wicked man? No, we see this question determined indeed, but in quite another manner; by God's commanding the friends to offer a sacrifice of atonement for their sin, in rashly censuring Job, and for the reproach which they had thrown upon his providence by their wrong reasonings; and the sincere, the upright Job appointed as the priest to offer it, and moreover rewarded for the trial he had undergone, with a double portion of prosperity.

As to what he says, that some clear revelation of the doctrine of a resurrection and a future state, would have been more suitable to God's great wisdom, than the mention of the crocodile and hippopotamus, and the other instances of his almighty power displayed in this speech, which he supposes fitter to terrify, than comfort Job; it may be replied, that if they had already received a tradition of this doctrine delivered down from Noah, (that is, from no great distance) it cannot be thought strange, if God should forbear to give them any new revelation of it. Nevertheless, those instances of his almighty power, which are set before them in this speech, were very proper to confirm them in the belief of it. And perhaps could we trace infidelity to its source, we should find it no other than a weak distrust of the divine power. But God's omnipotence to a good man, such as Job,

would



would be a consideration so far from terrifying him, (as Le Clerc supposes) that it must needs afford him the highest satisfaction. It would convince him indeed of the folly of his complaints; but there is a pleasure in being thus convinced.

BUT so much for the errors of Mons. Le Clerc, which I have laid open with the more freedom, because his authority is of great weight with some, who chuse rather to be led by authority than to be at the pains of searching and examining things themselves.

It can be no injury to his shade, I hope, to point out his mistakes; nor am I of the number of those who think the mere errors of men's understanding will be severely reckoned for in the great day of account. *Judicium Dei gestorum causa agitur, non questionum*—is a good saying of a learned Christian father. If it were otherwise, and if errors in opinion that do not flow from the corruption of the heart, were to be made matter of strict enquiry in the day of judgment, the studious and inquisitive, and they who engage in controversy more especially, either of the one side or the other, must needs be in a dangerous situation.

NEVERTHELESS, as this celebrated critic, in his commentary upon the books of the Old Testament, proceeds upon this wrong supposition, (as I apprehend it to be) that the doctrine of another life was not known or believed, either by the Jews, or ancient patriarchs, (though believed by all the world beside) I think his books ought to be read with caution. This persuasion has led him into many mistakes in his commentary upon the book of Job; and (I believe) many more in that upon the Psalms. And whoever shall attempt to explain the books of Psalms upon this footing, must (according to my apprehension) overlook many beautiful passages, and commit many blunders.

It is indeed scarce credible in the nature of the thing, that a regard to this life only, by the happiness

pinels of it what it will, if made the only aim, and considered as the sole reward of piety, could ever become a solid principle of religion; much less that it could furnish out so many pious strains of a sublime and rational devotion, as are to be met with in these sacred hymns. And this might incline us the more easily to believe, that good men, as well under the Mosaic dispensation, as before it, expected the rewards of their piety in another life; and that they understood the promises of God in general, made to his people, as intended to be fulfilled in some grand future period, and in another state of things. There are many places in the Old Testament, the book of Psalms particularly, that favour this notion: and some, that will not admit of any tolerable explication without it.

I SHALL take leave to instance in one place only; and this the rather, because, at first sight, it may seem to look the quite contrary way.

It is Psalm cxv. where the psalmist is setting forth the privilege of God's people above the Gentile world; that *when God was in heaven, and did whatsoever he pleased, but that the idols of the Heathen were silver and gold, the work of men's hands; which had eyes and see not, ears and hear not—in short, dead, senseless things.*

It follows verse 8. *They that make them shall be like unto them, and all they that put their trust in them.* That is, they shall soon become dead and senseless as they, without any hopes of a renovation or restitution to a state of happiness, which was the belief and hope of the people of God: if they rise again, it shall be only to their condemnation—This seems to be the meaning of this sentence, especially comparing it with what follows, at verse 17.

Our translation is, *They that make them are like unto them.* But this in the Hebrew would have been, *como-bem yose-bem*, or *como-bem ve-yose-bem*; for thus the present time is usually expressed, by an omission of the verb substantive; but here it is inserted, and that



that the future, *jibu*, shall be. And all the translations in the learned languages express the force of this word; but then they understand the future as meant imperatively, *Let them be*, &c. For which, I confess, I see no reason here—

BUT after setting the idols and their worshippers in this contemptible light, there follows an exhortation to Israel to trust in the Lord; with a promise of great blessings to those that worship him and *trust in him, both small and great*; that is, to every one of them without exception, ver. 12, 13.

*The Lord—shall bless the house of Israel; He shall bless the house of Aaron; He shall bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great—*And ver. 15, *Ye are the blessed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

By the way, if by *them that fear the Lord* be here meant the strangers, who were profelyted to the Jewish religion, (as some learned men explain the phrase) it is scarce to be supposed, that they, who in their state of Gentilism believed a future state, (however they might have entertained wrong notions of it) would easily throw off the belief of it, and change it for no future state at all, if that were the belief of the Jews.

BUT the following verses are the most remarkable to our purpose.

VERSE 16, 17, 18. *The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men. The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.*

*But we will bless the Lord, from this time forth for evermore.*

If we attend closely to this passage, we see the universe laid out in its three different apartments, viz. The heavens, the earth, and *Sheol* the region of the dead. The heavens as the habitation of Jehovah; the earth as given to the sons of Adam for their habitation; and a place of silence for *ham-methim*, the dead, who are said, *not to praise Jehovah*.

And

And then comes in the last verse, *va-anachnu*, and we, or, but we (in opposition to *bam-methim*, the dead) will praise Jehovah from this time forth for ever.

What can be the meaning of the opposition here put betwixt God's people and the dead; and the one's not praising Jehovah, the other praising him for ever? Could the Psalmist possibly mean their living to praise him upon earth? Why, the earth, he had told us just before, was given to all the sons of Adam; and the Gentiles lived as long upon it as the Jews, for any thing that appears to the contrary. Could he mean that they should never undergo the state of death? But this too could not be; for they died as naturally, and as soon perhaps as the Heathen. And their posterity must do the same though it extended itself to a thousand generations.—What then is that discriminating blessing here intended, that should distinguish the worshippers of Jehovah, all those that feared the Lord without exception, both small and great, (ver. 13,) from the idol-worshippers and contemners of Jehovah.

I FREELY own, I can make no sense of this passage any other way, than by understanding the word *bam-methim*, (the dead) as intended to characterize the Gentile nations; who, having no part in God's covenant of redemption, but being estranged from him by their idolatries and wickedness, were to be left for ever in the state of death, so as never more to rise to happiness, at least; whilst God's people, on the other hand, hoped for a joyful resurrection, and a future state of blessedness, wherein they should praise God for ever, in the most extensive sense of that phrase.

THERE is nothing forced, that I can perceive, in this explication; taking with us the notion so well established by a very learned prelate\*, that God's covenant made, (or rather renewed) with Abraham and the patriarchs, implied in it a conquest over

\* Use and Intent of Prophecy, Discourse 5.



death, and a removal of that curse denounced on Adam at the fall. And this notion stands confirmed by our Saviour's reasoning in the Gospel, where he exempts Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from amongst the dead, or *ham-methim*, by virtue of God's covenant with them to be their God: and from thence, as from an unanswerable argument, proves a future resurrection.

BUT I have gone a little beyond my first intention in this section.

LET us now turn from Le Clerc, to a writer of the greatest eminence among the Jews.

## S E C T VII.

THE Jews, (says the learned Grotius) as diligent as they have been in searching out every place in the Old Testament, that may, with any appearance, be referred to the resurrection, yet never explain this text of Job to that sense.

By the Jews, I suppose he must mean the later Jews. For that the ancient Jews understood the passage otherwise has been probably inferred from, that additional clause at the end of the Septuagint translation; where, after these words, with which the Hebrew ends, *so Job died, being old and full of days*, it follows, *ἔπειτα αὐτὸν ἀναστήσει μετὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν αἰῶνι οὐρανῶν*. But it is written, that he shall rise again with those whom the Lord raiseth up. Where the Greek translator, whoever he was, could find it written, that Job should rise again, is difficult to conceive; unless it were in this passage, or some other, where he declares his hope of a future resurrection.

WHATEVER reason might induce the later Jews to give another sense to the passage; whether a belief, that the doctrine of the resurrection was at first revealed to Moses, and to their nation only; and a pride that would not suffer them to acknowledge an

\* See *The Use and Intent of Prophecy*, p. 259. Disc. 2.

Arabian, and an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, to have been acquainted with it: this is certain, that for want of this clue, they have wretchedly mistaken the whole drift and design of this noble poem.

Let the reader but consult Maimonides, the most learned of them all (as he is generally esteemed) and he will be surpris'd at the strange account he gives of the book of Job, and of the hero of the poem in particular; whom, instead of that *perfect and upright man*, (as he is described in the history) that *feared God and eschewed evil*; one would rather conclude, from the sketch he has drawn of his principles, to have been the vilest of men.

This learned rabbi, being a great philosopher himself, pretends to find, in the arguments and speeches of Job and his friends, the several opinions about providence, which were held by the sects of philosophers of after times. From so hopeful an undertaking, what can we expect, but a philosophical dream, or delirium?

Accordingly the opinion he ascribes to Job is this, That by reason of the baleness of the human race, God makes no distinction betwixt the just and unjust. They are both alike unworthy the regards of his providence.

And that we may not think this indiscriminate way of dealing to be only for a time, and hereafter to be changed and rectified; he makes it to extend in Job's account, to the whole term of this life, and the term of this life to be all—that there is nothing to be expected after death; no hope remaining to the good, any more than to the wicked, but both perish

\* *Propter utilitatem generis humani eundem esse rationem justis et injustis coram Deo.*  
Maimon. More Nev. p. 400. I quote from Buxtorf's Latin translation.

\* *Post hoc exponit, quod nulla sit expectatio post mortem et per consequens nulla super sit spes? sed quod ista sint adscribenda, derelictioni & oblivioni Dei.*



alike. And that all this is to be ascribed to the dereliction and oblivion (or neglect) of God.

What might he add just after, that their wise men looked upon this opinion of Job to be, "evil and "mischievous in the highest degree \*." It is, in effect, atheistical. For not to believe that God governs the world, and rewards and punishes either in this life or another, is the same, as to all the purposes of life, as to deny his existence.

The particular passages, on which he builds his charge, are such as these.—That assertion of Job (Ch. ix. 22.) *This is one thing, therefore I said it: He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.* And again, Ch. xxi. 23, 24. *One dieeth in his full strength—Another in the bitterness of his soul—They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* To which he adds that description of the prosperity of wicked men given by Job in the beginning of that chapter, *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, see are mighty in power? Their seed are established in their sight.* 18th verse 7, 8.

This, I think, is the full strength of his evidence: for though he quotes a text or two more, they are wretchedly mistaken, and little to his purpose.

BUT all this does not prove, that Job thought the just and unjust were equally neglected by God, *propter vilitatem generis humani*, or because mankind was in reality below his care, as Maimonides represents his opinion: Job only mentions the fact, that, in public calamities especially, the just and unjust for the most part fall without distinction; which is demonstrable from experience, as far as it is possible for us to know who are just, and who unjust; and therefore is an old and standing observation.

NOR does Job deny a future state; but now and then assert it, and at other times leave it to be infer'd

\* *Nosti autem quod sapientes nostri dixerint, hanc Jobi sententiam in summo gradu esse malam*—p. 401.

from the drift of his reasoning. The charging him therefore with such a principle as this, that the prosperity of wicked men, and the sufferings of the good, and in general the mixed irregular state of the world is owing to the absolute dereliction of almighty God; and that there is no future state to be expected where these disorders shall be rectified, is a plain instance, how far men, that are otherwise learned and judicious, may be blinded and misled by a strong prejudice.

BUT it is to be remembred, that the purpose of this learned man was to reduce the several opinions about providence, which he fancies to be maintained by the speakers in this dialogue, to those of the philosophers, or heads of sects, in after-times: and this of Job particularly he supposes to agree with that of Aristotle\*. He might as well have said with that of Epicurus; whose well known tenet it was, That the Deity is too high and happy in himself to have any regard to human affairs or human actions: they are beneath his care and concern.

BUT which ever of the philosophers espoused it, the Jewish doctors (it seems) declared their detestation of it in the strongest terms; and used to cry out †, *Terra super os Jobi*—&c. “Let Job’s mouth be “stopped with earth—He denied the resurrection of “the dead—he begun with contumelious and blas- “phemous speeches.”

AND had the charge been just, it is certain these expressions of their abhorrence had not been amiss.

BUT before these wise men thus exclaimed, they should have examined well into the matter; and they might soon have found reason to suspect, that the monstrous things with which they here charge Job, might possibly be owing to their own mistakes. For

\* *Sive autem sit parabola, sive revera dixerint, siquidem sit recepta, sententia illa quæ Jobo adscribitur convenit cum sententia Aristotelis; sententia Eliphaz cum sententia legis nostræ; sententia Balaam cum sententia Muatzali; sententia Tzophar cum sententia secunda Asaria; quæ fuerunt sententiæ friscæ de providentia—M. N. p. 402.*

† *More Newsch. p. 401.*



they might well suppose, that their ancestors of the great synagogue (whom they believe to have settled the canon, and who were at least as wise as themselves) would never have admitted this book for canonical, if it had taught such dangerous errors; much less would the prophet Ezekiel, or God by him, have done so much honour to the patron of these errors, as to rank him with the holiest of men, and the most favoured of the Deity, such as Noah and Daniel.

ONE would wonder indeed how it was possible for these sages, these *sapientes nostri*, (as Maimonides always calls them) to have entertained so wrong an opinion of the character and speeches of Job, if they had considered that declaration of God himself in favour of him once and again made; that Job, his servant Job, had spoken of him the thing that was right, and that his three friends had not, Ch. xlii.\*7.

AND yet this too Maimonides and the others had considered. But all that they will allow him to have spoken well, or God to have approved, was his last words, “which contained \* a confession of his error and his repentance.” As if one word of this kind were enough to make amends for all the wicked and blasphemous things which they charge upon his other speeches; and not only so, but to induce the Deity to reward him with a double portion of prosperity.

BUT let us see what they offer in support of their assertion, that “it was Job’s last words only which the Deity approved.” For it is indeed a material point, and deserves well to be considered.

AND first, they render the words, *Ci-lo dibbartem el-i necona*, (which we translate, ‘Ye have not spoken of me’) ‘Ye have not spoken to me the thing that is right, like my servant Job’†.

\* — Et hanc verborum speciem non referri ad istum huius parabole sensum, verum causam illius esse, quod Job istam sententiam, quæ summe erronea est, revocavit, errorisque sui demonstrationem attulit. p. 401.

† Sed quia Deus ad Eliphaz et socios ejus ait, non loquuti estis ad me rectum, sicut servus meus Job; dicunt sapientes nostri, &c. p. 401.

Now though it be true that the præposition *el* most commonly signifies *to*, yet it likewise signifies *of*, or *towards*, or *concerning* any thing or person; as might be shewn from a great number of examples.

I SHALL produce some few, but enough to establish the point before us; and the rather, because I shall have occasion to make use of this passage in the next section; and therefore it will not be amiss to fix the sense of it here.

IN 1 Kings xiv. 3. God says to the prophet Ahijah, *Lo the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee* (Heb. *to enquire a word of thee*) *el ben-ab, concerning her son*—And so 2 Sam. x. 2. David sends an embassy to Chanun, king of the Ammonites, to comfort him, *el ab-to, concerning his father*; that is, to condole with him for his father's death. So Ezek. xix. 4. *Vejsbmeyu el-av goim, and the nations beard of, or concerning him*—And many other places.

NAY, as if it were a thing perfectly indifferent, we find the præposition used in both its significations in the very same sentence: as Jerem. xlvii. 1. *The word of the Lord came (el) to Jeremiah the prophet (el Pelishtim) concerning the Philistines*. So Isa. xxxvii. 21. *Whereas thou hast prayed (el) to me, (el Sancherib) concerning Sennacherib*. Thus likewise, 1 Sam. i. 26, 27. *I am the Woman (says Hannah to Eli) who stood by thee praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed—Where praying to the Lord, and praying for the child are both expressed by the same præposition el—El ban-nayer ba-zè bithpallalti, for, or rather, concerning this child I prayed—This child in short, was the subject of her prayers, as God was the subject of these men's discourses? and of whom, and his providence Job had spoken right things, the others not.*

THERE is yet another sense of the præposition *el*, wherein it may be naturally enough understood here; I mean as it sometimes signifies *before*, or *in presence of*—Thus 2 Kings v. 25. *Gehazi went in, and stood (el adon-av) before his master*—As God therefore is every where present, and this whole dispute of the



parties must have been carried on before him; he may well be understood to say to the friends, 'Ye have not spoken before me the thing that is right—' I have been a witness of your whole debate; and must tell you, you have thought uncharitably, you have spoken rashly, you have reasoned wrong.'

THAT one or other of these must be the meaning here, seems plain; for the three friends had spoken nothing to God either good or bad, and therefore could not be said to have spoken to him what was not right.

If it be objected, that their silence might be here condemned, and their not confessing their errors with the same readiness that Job did; it concerned Maimonides in particular, and his brother rabbins to consider whether, according to their notion of things, they had any errors to confess. For this learned man makes two of the three friends to have maintained opinions about providence, which he must allow to be at least harmless. \* Bildad, 'he says, believed a change or a catastrophe of things, and a future recompence after this life.' † And, 'the sentiments of Eliphaz were agreeable to the doctrine taught by their law' ‡. And yet what is strange, we find the three alike condemned; and Job, who according to these men had held the worst opinion of them all, not only accepted himself, but honoured with the high privilege of making an attonement for the others. How is it possible to reconcile all this? Would not any one conclude, that the divine sentence ought to be read backward, or inverted thus; For Job hath not spoken of me the thing that is right, but ye my servants have—Take therefore seven bullocks and seven rams, and offer up for Job.

\* Bildad Shucbita autem sententia in hac questione fuit, quod credidit permutationem, catastrophem, & recompensationem—that is, (as he afterwards explains himself) in seculo venturo. p. 402.

† Sententia Eliphaz (convenit) cum sententia legis nostrae. p. 403.

BUT this learned man proceeds further to offer two things in excuse for Job and his errors, and which their rabbins suppose to have rendered his repentance the more easily accepted and rewarded by the Deity.

THE first is, that he fell into these blasphemous conceits about providence, merely through his ignorance of God: and that because at the time when he uttered these speeches he 'only knew God by the *cabbala* or tradition, like the vulgar; not by 'speculation \* like the men of reason and philosophy'. And to this he wrests that saying of Job's, (Chap. xlii. 5.) *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

THIS observation is very suitable to the character of Maimonides, and the learned rabbins of those times, who were surfeited (I suppose) with the folly of their own traditions, and appear to have entertained an high opinion of the philosophy which was then in fashion. It is easy to perceive, that this is one principal source of all the mistakes Maimonides † is guilty of in explaining the design of this book.

BUT he should have considered, that the tradition in Job's time was quite another thing than the *cabbala* in his own. The great points of religion were then delivered down with much more certainty, through a very few hands, from the first man who had been divinely taught them.

\* *Sed dicunt (sapientes nostri) illum (scil. Jobum) quæcunque dixit, dixisse eo tempore, quo nullam adhuc veram Dei habuit scientiam & cognitionem, sed per cabbalam tantum, sicut cum cognoscunt vulgus hominum—Jobus enim existimavit apparentes istas beatitudines, ut est sanitas, divitiæ, liberi, esse perfectissimas, quamdiu per cabbalam & traditionem tantum Deum cognoverit, non vero per speculationem, &c.*

P. 401.

† R. Moïse raisonne trop en philosophe—'Rabbi Moses (Maimonides) reasons too much like a philosopher;' is father Simon's censure of him. *Crit. des proleg. de Dupin.* Tom. 3. p. 135.



And by all the light that we can gather of the history of those ancient times, the quite contrary to what he asserts appears to be the truth, viz. that men received the true knowledge of God at first by tradition, and lost it afterward by speculation.

THE other excuse their wise men make for Job is this, that what he uttered against providence was through the extremity of his pain and grief; and was therefore overlooked, and not imputed to him by the Deity. For this they lay down as a rule, (to give it in their own way of expression, which has something odd and peculiar) *Non capitur homo propter dolorem suum; vel non prebenditur homo in dolore suo.* That is, says Maimonides, *Non imputatur ei peccatum propter summum ejus dolorem.* 'Sin is not imputed to him, by reason of his excessive sorrows.'

BUT this I believe most casuists will agree, is carrying the point a little too far. However, let us for once suppose what he uttered to be never so excusable, as it was the language of his grief; yet surely these gentlemen did not well consider, that in ascribing these atheistical and blasphemous speeches to Job, they did in reality give the victory to Satan; and make the other do all which that wicked spirit promised for him, taking it in the very worst sense, viz. blaspheme or curse God. And then where could be the equity of crowning this impatient sufferer, who behaved so basely and unworthily, with all the praise and the reward due to a conqueror?

WE see then, how all the later Jews understood the scope and design of this book of Job, and how perversely they thought of the character and speeches of this good man; and all from their embracing this fundamental error, that Job denied the resurrection and a future state.

BUT because the place on which Maimonides founds his charge, is chiefly the speech of Job, Chap. 21. And because there is none of all his speeches wherein he more clearly delivers his opinion about providence; it may not be amiss to take a general view of the scope

scope and drift of that whole chapter ; and see if we can borrow a little sunshine from the poem itself, to clear up the perplexing cloud and dullness of these heavy commentators.

THE reasoning of Job throughout his speeches turns upon this point, that things are, for the most part, dealt out here promiscuously. From whence the inference is plain, that there is no judging of men's being either righteous or wicked by the good which they enjoy, or the evil which they suffer. And this might convince his friends of the rashness and inhumanity of their censures of him.

THE three friends, on the other hand, having taken it into their head to think him guilty of some heinous crime, for no other reason but because he was thus miserably afflicted, are very large in setting out the judgments of God against obstinate and incorrigible sinners. And this was the purport of Zophar's speech particularly, Chap. xx.

To which Job replies, in the chapter we are now to consider. And after a gentle complaint of their severe treatment of him, and desiring their attention to what he was going to say, which was a thing plain and clear in fact, though it made him tremble to think of it, he shews, that wicked men sometimes live long, and prosper, and go to to their graves in peace, without feeling any signal judgment or calamity in this life ; and that this was so true, and so evident to observation, that it even hardened many in their wickedness, and tempted them to throw off all regard for God and religion.

THE passage is a very fine one, and therefore I shall quote it at large.

CHAP. XXI. 5. and following verses.

*Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.*

*Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.*

*Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power ?*

*Their*



Their seed is established in their sight with them; and their offspring before their eyes.

Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.

Their bull gendeth and faileth not, their cow calveth and casteth not her calf.

They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

Therefore they say unto God, depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

To stop at the beauties of the poetry, as they occur in these speeches, is perhaps hazarding our attention to the thread of reasoning; and yet, who can deny himself the pleasure of admiring what is excellent?

As Job well knew, that this account of the prosperity of wicked men, however necessary to his argument, would have something shocking in it to the ears of those to whom it was addressed; the delicacy with which he introduces it is inimitable. *Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth! Even when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? As if he had said, That thus it is in fact, is plain. It is with awe and reverence I speak it. But as for you, I am persuaded you will never be able upon your principles to account for it.*

THE description which follows of a prosperous estate, is such indeed as might justly create envy, were a wicked man in any estate to be envied: for we have here the chief ingredients of human happiness, as it respects this life, brought together, and described in terms exactly suiting the simplicity of manners and the way of living in Job's time and country.

As

As first, security and safety to themselves and families, Verse 9. *their houses are safe from fear*— of the incursions of robbers, (we may suppose) or the depredations of the neighbouring clans, so usual in those ancient times, and of which Job had felt the mischievous effects.

NEXT, Health, or a freedom from diseases, called in the language of that age, *the rod of God*. \* *Neither is the rod of God upon them.*

To this is added plenty of cattle, the riches of those times. Verse 10. *Their bull gendeth and faileth not; their cow calveth and casteth not her calf.*

NEXT comes a numerous and hopeful off-spring; and what a rural picture has he drawn of them! *They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.* One sees them (methinks) tripping it upon the green, with a flush of health and joy in their looks. *They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ, or pipe.*

LASTLY, And to crown all, after a prosperous and pleasant life, comes an easy death. *They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave,* Verse 13.

As every thing in this divine poem is indeed wonderful, there is scarce any thing more to be admired, than the variety of descriptions that are given us of human life, in its most exalted prosperity on the one hand, and its deepest distresses on the other. For this is what their subject led them to enlarge upon on both sides; with this only difference, that the three friends were for limiting prosperity to the good, adversity and misery to the bad; whereas Job insists upon a mixed distribution of these things from the hand of providence. But as all of them, in every speech almost, enlarge upon

So the Cyclopes, in Homer, acknowledge diseases to be sent from Jupiter, *Od. 9. 411.*

Νόσος γ' ἔστιν ἐκ Διὸς μεγάλης ἀλγιστάη.

And so David says of Saul, (1 Sam. xxi. 19.) *Either the Lord shall smite him, (that is, He shall die of some disease) or his time shall come to die, (when life shall have run out its natural course) or he shall descend into battle, and perish.*



one or other of these topics, the variety of imagery and colouring in which they paint these different estates to us, all drawn from nature, and suiting the simplicity of those ancient times, is inexpressibly amusing and entertaining. And then the religious cast thrown over them, considered as the dispensations of providence, that we can receive neither good nor evil but from God the judge of all, (which is a point acknowledged on both hands) is what renders these descriptions interesting and affecting to us in the highest degree. And the whole, if well consider'd, affords no contemptible argument of the antiquity of the book; which, I hope, may serve to justify this remark.

BUT to return, if I have digressed.

AFTER this elegant description of the prosperity of some wicked men, Job proceeds on the other hand to confess, what was likewise apparent in the ways of providence, that some of them were as remarkably distinguished by their wretchedness, being exposed to the most dreadful evils and calamities.

THIS second particular he introduces at verse 16. *Lo, their good is not in their hand; the counsel of the wicked is far from me.*

He knew that while he had been recounting the prosperity of the wicked, he had touched upon a tender point, to which his adversaries would be apt enough to give a wrong turn, as if he had been thereby pleading the cause of impiety. And therefore he adds this apology for himself, verse 16. which is to this purpose—

‘I would not have you think, that, because I say the wicked sometimes prosper, therefore I believe their prosperity to be owing to themselves, or in their own power\*. God forbid, that I should

\* Verse 16. *Lo, their good is not (be-jad-am) in their hand*, that is, in their power. The expression answers exactly to the Latin word *proprius*, as used by Terence for a thing so truly a man's own, or in his own power, as that he need not fear a change. And therefore the commentators explain it by *perpetuus*.

‘ give such countenance to impiety. No, though  
‘ they may thus presumptuously imagine with them-  
‘ selves, I am not of their opinion, nor yet of their  
‘ society; *the counsel of the wicked is far from me.* I  
‘ know that all the happiness which they can boast  
‘ is merely by the will and sufferance of almighty  
‘ God; and that sometimes he is pleased to make  
‘ them terrible examples of his justice.’ For in-  
‘ stance,

VERSE 17. *How often is the candle of the wicked put  
out? And how oft cometh their destruction upon them?  
God distributeth sorrows in his anger.*

18. *They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff  
that the storm carrieth away.*

19. *God layeth up iniquity for his children: He re-  
wardeth him, and he shall know it.*

20. *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink  
of the wrath of the Almighty.*

21. *For what pleasure hath he in his house after him,  
when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?*

It is strange to observe how learned men† have  
been perplexed in the explaining these foregoing verses,  
for want of attending closely to the design of Job.  
They have endeavoured, all they could, to soften the  
force of these expressions, or to turn them to a quite  
contrary sense; because they thought the plain and na-  
tural sense inconsistent with Job’s argument. Where-  
as the whole (as I have above intimated) is nothing  
but a concession to his adversaries, that wicked men  
are sometimes thus severely punished as they in their  
speeches had been fond of representing. But then he  
had before shewn that they were sometimes as remark-  
ably prosperous; and this made way for a third par-  
ticular, which is indeed his general assertion all along,  
and the medium by which he endeavoured to con-  
vince them of the rashness of their censures and suspi-  
cions of him, viz. that things are dealt out here pro-  
miscuously, and without any strict regard to merit or  
demerit.

† Bishop Patrick, Schultens, and others.

AND



AND as he had introduced the foregoing particular by an easy transition at verse the 16th; so he does this by another as easy and natural at verse 22.

*Shall any teach God knowledge? Seeing he judgeth those that are high.*

As if he had said, 'You see then the method of God's providence from what appears in fact. And will you presume to censure or correct it? Will you say he ought to take another method, and prescribe laws to the great judge of the world?' It is evident to common observation that good and evil are dispensed by him, for the most part, without any exact regard to the good or ill deserts of persons; and this during the whole period of human life from the cradle to the grave. For,

VERSE 23. *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.*

24. *His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.*

25. *And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.*

26. *They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*

THUS then (argues this holy man) whether we take a view of men in their lives, or in their deaths; by all that appears to human sight, there is no such distinction made, as you would feign persuade me of, between the righteous and the wicked, such as will warrant you to judge either of their piety or impiety, by what they enjoy or what they suffer. We see many a wicked man punished, it is true; but we see, perhaps, as many live in affluence and ease, and some to die at last in peace. And in general, the course of human affairs, according to the best notions we can form to ourselves of right and wrong, seem strangely irregular and perverted.

AND now, What should be inferred from all this? One would think the inference could scarce be missed either by Job or his friends, if we will allow them to

reason

reason at all. Especially since (as Maimonides \* himself tells us) they all agree in these two undisputed points, 'that God sees and orders all things, and that there can be no iniquity with him.' If then the present irregular course of things is such, as cannot possibly be reconciled with the equity of the divine nature, supposing this life to be the whole extent of our being; the consequence seems clear, that there must be some other state to be expected, wherein these irregularities shall be fully adjusted.

AND had Job been silent as to this conclusion, the premisses themselves would have enforced it. But indeed it is what he himself expressly asserts in the following part of the chapter, viz. That these prosperous wicked men, who experience so much good at the hand of God, and in return disclaim, and even defy their benefactor; and who yet, with all their impiety, are permitted to live and die like other men, shall receive a dreadful recompence of their past lives in the future day of judgment. Verse 30. *They are reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.*

THAT by the day of destruction, and the day of wrath in this place, is meant the day of judgment, I hope to make appear in the following section. And shall only add here, that such a declaration of his belief of the future punishment of wicked men was very proper to follow that such a declaration of his belief of the future punishment which Job had made in his former speech, (Ch. xix.) of his own hope of a resurrection, and a gracious sentence in the day of judgment.

\* More Nev. p. 399. *Extra controversiam primo omnium apud omnes quinque, Jobum videlicet et amicos ejus hoc fuit: Deo notum esse quicquid Jobo adversi accidis, ipsoque auctore plagas istas omnes e. e. Deinde quod nulla coram ipso sit iniquitas, &c.*



## S E C T. VIII.

THE great objection urged by the learned author of the *Divine Legation* against understanding the words of Job, (Chap. xix. 25.) of a *resurrection* and a day of *judgment*, is this; That though the doctrine of a *resurrection* was an "argument full of piety and conviction," and such as the others "had never replied to," yet Job "never once resumes" this argument, "never upbraids his adversaries for their silence; nor triumphs, as he well might, in their inability to answer it. But if ever it was the object of their thoughts, it passes off like a dream or reverie, that neither side paid any attention to. \*."

Now though I have already shewn, that this objection proceeds upon a mistake of the main question in dispute betwixt these friends; and that Job declares his hope of a *resurrection* and a day of *judgment* for quite another purpose than the learned writer supposes: yet to shew, that he is likewise mistaken in supposing that Job "never once resumes this argument," (as he is pleased to call it) I shall here produce some passages from his following speeches, wherein (I think) he plainly alludes to, or asserts the doctrine of a *future judgment* and another state of life.

AND I shall begin where I left off in the last section, with that of Job, Chap. xxi. 27. and following verses: a text, which has puzzled the critics much.

VER. 27. Behold (says Job) I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? And where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?

29. Have ye not asked them that go by the way? And do ye not know their tokens?

30. That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

By the day of destruction, and the day of wrath, I believe it will appear from the context, can be meant no

\* D. L. V. 2. p. 545.

other than the future day of judgment; which to the wicked and ungodly is every where represented in Scripture as a day of wrath, a day of destruction and perdition. They shall be punished (says St. Paul) with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 9. And so St. Peter (2 Ep. iii. 7.) calls the day of judgment a day of perdition to ungodly men. And it is remarkable, that Job, where he declares to his friends, that he had been all along with-held from sinning by a pious awe of the divine justice, (meaning, as I apprehend, the thoughts of a future judgment) he uses a like expression, Chap. xxxi. 23. *Destruction from God was a terror to me.* *TM, ed, destruction,* the very same word that is used here.

To understand it of a temporal destruction, is to suppose Job to cut the neck of his own argument at once, and to fall in directly with the reasoning of his friends: for thus it would stand—

*Behold I know your thoughts* (says Job) *and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me—* That is, I know what you would insinuate by the speeches which you make, such as this which follows.

*For you say, where is the house of the prince? And where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?* As if you should say, What is become of the house of Job, who lived like a prince? Or what in general is the portion of the wicked? Does not a great and sure destruction overtake them?

THIS is evidently the meaning of the question.

THE answer follows immediately.

*Ask those that go by the way; and do ye not know their tokens? That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, &c.*

Now if it were meant of a temporal destruction, it directly confirms the insinuation of the friends; and the inference would be unavoidable, Therefore Job must needs be wicked.

THIS consequence is so plain, that Grotius and others, to avoid it, have put a very different sense up-



on the words, which I shall consider by and by. But first I shall shew how aptly the sense, which I contend for, agrees with the context, and with Job's design in this speech.

The great difficulty of the passage lies at verse 29. And the commentators have been at a loss to give a satisfactory account, why the *travellers*, *וְיָדְעוּ*, *viatores*—should be consulted about the question here proposed, or what are the marks or tokens here referred to.

But I take the true key to it to be this—

It was the custom of the ancients to bury near the high roads, and in the most publick and conspicuous places; and to erect a pillar or monument over the dead, to preserve his memory. These pillars, if they had any inscription at all upon them, recorded, no doubt, the name\* and titles of the person, and perhaps some of the happiest circumstances of his life, or what was most remarkable in his life or death. And moreover, these inscriptions usually bespoke the traveller, with a *siste viator*, or to that purpose—

THESE then, I apprehend, are the marks or tokens to which Job directs his friends; and which he would have them either to consult themselves, or to ask the travellers about them; and from thence they would be naturally led to make the inference or conclusion, which follows in the next verse.

\* There is a remarkable passage in the speech of Bildad, Chap. xvi. 17. which plainly points at this custom. Speaking of the calamities that befall the wicked, he says, *His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street*. That is, He shall have no monument erected for him, to preserve his name or memory. The Hebrew is very expressive, *Ve-lo shem lo hal peni chutz*; and there shall not be a name to him upon the face of the street, or publick place. Which shews, that it cannot be meant of his name tossed about upon the tongues of the people, (as Le Clerc and some others explain it) but rather perpetuated by some publick inscription.

And some learned men have thought, that when Job (Ch. xxix. 24) desires that *his words might be engraven on a rock*; he meant it, of this famous confession of his being inscribed on his sepulchral pillar— See Dr. Grey's Job; and Codurgus among the critics—

For as they might observe several monuments among the rest, erected for such as had been notoriously wicked in their lives, and yet had run a long course of years in prosperity, and been buried at last with great pomp; it is with reason he bids them infer from hence, that the punishment of such as these was reserved for a more solemn season, which was the proper time of retribution, and not the mixed uncertain state of this life. *Ask the traveller* (says he) *that goes by the high way, or consult the tombs and monuments there; and from thence you may learn this important lesson, that the wicked is reserved to a future day of judgment; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. Reserved in the grave, and in Sheol, as in a prison; from whence they shall be brought forth like criminals, to receive their sentence, or be drawn to execution—*The very terms \* plainly lead us to this sense—

To strengthen this exposition, I might observe, that the tombs, or monuments erected for the dead, are in Homer, the most ancient writer next the Sacred, called *Σηματα*, marks or tokens. *Σῆμα τέ μοι χεῖται*, &c. says the ghost of poor Elpenor to Ulysses, (*Od.* 11. 75.) *Erect a tomb for me on the sea-shore, and set up the oar, with which I rowed, on the top of it; that it may be a monument to posterity of an unfortunate man.*

BUT what confirms, beyond all exception, the interpretation which I have given to this passage, is that Job pursues the same way of reasoning in the following part of his speech; and shews that the mighty wicked man is so far from being punished in this world, that he does what he pleases without any to controul him, or so much as to open their lips against him. Verse 31.

*Who shall declare his way to his face? And who shall repay him what he hath done?*

THAT nevertheless, such an one shall at last go down to the grave in peace, and be buried with great pomp. Ver. 32.

\* So *Isai.* liii. 7. *Lat-tebach jubal*, the same word; *He shall be brought forth to the slaughter—*



Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

THE Hebrew is, *Ve-bû*, with an emphasis, Even he shall be brought to the grave, and over the tomb he shall watch—— that is, in his statue or effigies——

A stately monument (says bishop Patrick) is raised to preserve his memory, and represent him as if he were still living. It follows, Verse 33.

The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him; and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.

LET us then briefly recollect the drift of Job's discourse, and his meaning will appear evident.

He had observed, Ver. 23, &c. of the promiscuous dispensations of God to men here, that *one dieth in his full strength—— Another in the bitterness of his soul—— They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*

AND then he addresses himself to his friends, Ver. 27.

Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.

For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? And where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?

Ask (says Job) the passengers that go by the high way, or consult the monuments of princes and wicked men\* there; and you will presently receive an answer to your question, viz. that death and the grave is the house appointed for all living, for the righteous and the wicked, for the prince and for the beggar†. But know, O vain men, that this,

N. B. It is plain that *Osoth-am*, their tokens, may either refer to the travellers mentioned in the same verse, or the prince and the wicked mentioned in the former. But as a reference of the pronoun to things or persons at the farthest distance, is a little unusual in speech; it was this, perhaps, that made the commentators overlook the true sense of this passage.

† So Pindar, Nem. Od. 7.

Παρά σῶμα νίκης—— I cite it for the sake of the word *σῶμα*, used here, as with Homer above——

which

‘ which is the common lot of all, can never be the proper punishment of any—— That there is a farther judgment which attends the wicked, and they are only kept in the grave, or in *Sheol*, as a prison, from whence they shall be brought forth, at the last day, to receive their sentence of condemnation—— They are reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.’

‘ AND this you might have collected’ (as he proceeds to argue in the following verses) ‘ from that constant course of prosperity, which sometimes attends these wicked men in their lives and in their deaths.’

‘ THOUGH he be now so absolute, that no man dares so much as to complain of the evils which they suffer by him; (*Who shall declare his way to his face? And who shall repay him what he hath done?*) Yet such a man as this shall live long, and prosper all his days, and shall be buried at last with great pomp, and a stately monument erected over him, with his effigies placed at top, as if he still lived and breathed—— Even he shall be brought to the grave, and over the tomb he shall watch, Ver. 32.

It follows, Ver. 33, 34. ‘ The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him; and every man shall draw after him; as there are innumerable before him.’

‘ How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood.’

I need only give bishop Patrick’s paraphrase of these two last verses of the chapter.

‘ THEN he lies quietly in the earth, and none disturbs his ashes. He suffers nothing but what all men shall do after him, as innumerable have done before him. See then how all you discharge the office of comforters, whose answers have so little truth in them. For you maintain, that prosperity is the inseparable companion of piety; when every body can tell you, that none flourish more than the wicked, and that calamities are common to all mankind.’



It is strange that the good bishop, who explains this latter part so well, should err in his explication of the former : but having unhappily followed Grotius in interpreting the great text in question of a temporal deliverance ; he generally follows him in giving a wrong turn to every other passage, where a *future judgment* or another *state of life* is spoken of, or alluded to.

Thus Grotius, instead of *the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction*, (Ver. 30.) renders it, 'The wicked is preserved in the day of destruction.' And so bishop Patrick after him, 'The wicked is spared very often in a common calamity.'

BUT we may ask, How does this agree with the context ? Or what relation has it to the foregoing verse ? Why must the traveller be asked about it ? Or what are the marks or tokens here referred to ?

To all this Grotius, who only explains a verse here and there, very discreetly says nothing. The bishop, who had undertaken a compleat paraphrase throughout, renders the words, *Do ye not know their tokens*, thus ; 'Let them tell you their observations about God's providence.' He might have rendered it with just as much authority, 'Let them tell you their dreams.'

BUT, beside the difficulty of reconciling this sense of the words with the context, the translation itself is wrong. And to render it, *The wicked is preserved or spared in the day of destruction*, is to put a very unnatural force upon the words. For the Hebrew (*le-jom*) does not signify *in the day*, but *to or for the day* \*.

Nor

\* Schultens indeed, (though he understands the great text, Ch. xix. of a *future judgment*) yet falls in here with Grotius and bishop Patrick, and renders the words, *In die exitii subducitur malus*—— But then he does not say, that this is the proper rendering of *le-jom* ; but says, *le-jom* is here put for *be-jom*. He produces one example in support of his conjecture ; but that is the most unlucky one he could have pitched upon—— *Le-jom* (says he) *pro be-jom, ut lajereb ad vesperam*, Gen. xlix. 27.

Now

Non does the other word (חָשַׁח) *chashac*, signify to *pre-serve* or *spare*; but to reserve or keep in custody, to shut up as in a prison or dungeon. For the same verb, in another sense, (but of near affinity, according to the genius of the language) signifies to be dark, or to make dark, (*who is this that darkeneth counsel*, &c. Job xxxviii. 2.) and so the noun, חָשָׁךְ, *darkness*, *dark*, &c. And it is by thus comparing the different significations of a Hebrew word in all its several shapes, that we arrive at the most proper and precise, or the

Now though *la-yereb* sometimes signifies *ad-vesperam*, (at even as we say in English) yet in this text of Genesis, I think it ought to have been rendered *in vesperam*, *for or against* the evening. For as it is in the common translations, the sense is somewhat odd. *Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* Rather (as one would think, and as some take the liberty to transpose the words) *he shall divide at night, and eat in the morning.* But the true sense is probably this—‘He shall not only devour and fill himself with prey in the morning; but shall have enough to divide and to lay up a portion, *la-yereb*, for the evening also.’ This, the naturalists tell us, is the way of wolves, (as every one knows it is of dogs) when they have glutted themselves with a part of their food, to hide or bury the remainder in the earth for another feast.

The beauty and propriety of this allusion (we see) is quite lost in the common translations, which do by no means do justice to the original, where the distinction is so plain, viz. *lab-boker*, in the morning, but *la-yereb*, (not *ba-yereb*) for the evening.

In this, and many other instances, there is reason to believe the Scripture language to be much more exact than the generality of commentators seem to have been aware of.

There is a passage in one of the prophets, where this custom of wolves is plainly alluded to, and which therefore may serve to illustrate the text we have been considering. Zeph. iii. 3. *Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves, they know not the bones till the morrow.* Or rather, *they do not strip the flesh, and leave the bones for the morrow, lo garmu lab-boker, non ex-offaverunt in mane.* Her judges (says the prophet) are like evening wolves, but in this more ravenous than they, that they devour their prey all at once, and leave neither flesh nor bones for the next morning. Here, we see, *lab-boker* is used with the same exactness as *la-yereb*. Gen. xlix. 27.

We have a plain example of the difference betwixt the *ב* and *ל*, Exod. xix. 11. *And be ready, la-jom basbelishi, against the third day, for ba-jom basbelishi, on the third day the Lord will descend.* So Exod. xxxiv. 2. *lab-boker*, and *ba-boker*.



original sense of it—— It is remarkable to our purpose, that the prophet Jeremiah uses this word, (Lam. iii. 6.) where he is speaking of his own confinement in the dungeon, and compares himself with those who are shut up in the grave—— *Be-machshacim koshibani*, &c. *He hath set me* (made me to dwell) *in dark places, as they that be dead of old.*

If this word therefore ever signifies to *preserve* or *spare*, it must mean it in the sense of being *shut up* in order to their safety or preservation: but this can never be the meaning here, where they are expressly said to be shut up (*le-jom ed*) for the day of destruction. Just as St. Jude says of the rebel angels, whom God, *ὡς ἐκείνους τῶν ἀγγέλων, hath reserved under darkness for the judgment of the great day*, Jud. vi.

In short, if we will allow the writer of the book of Job to be a good interpreter of his own words, we shall find the sense of this phrase to be fixed beyond exception, Chap. xxxviii. 23. where God speaks of the treasures of the snow and hail, which he has *reserved against the day of battle and war*. The words are the very same which are used here—— *חָשַׁחְתִּי, chashachtî*, I have reserved, and *le-jom*, to or for the day, *against the day*, as it is well expressed in our translation. And so both Grotius and the bishop are forced to understand it here: so that it is strange to observe, how the greatest men may be misled by their zeal, and attachment to a wrong hypothesis.

I HAVE dwelt the longer upon this passage, because none of the critics or commentators that I have seen, have given a clear or satisfactory expolition of it; and because, in the light wherein it appears upon this thorough examination, it is so plain a testimony of the belief of this good man of a *future judgment* and another *state of life*.

I SHALL endeavour to make amends to the reader, by being more brief in what follows.

THE next passage I shall take notice of, as affording us a proof of Job's faith, is that noble plea he makes for himself against the reproachful insinuations

of

of his mistaken friends, as if he must needs have been a wicked man and a hypocrite, under all the fair appearances of a strict piety and integrity. Chap. xxvii. 5, &c.

*God forbid that I should justify you: Till I die I will not remove my integrity from me.*

*My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.*

*Let mine enemy be as the wicked; and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*

*For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*

THERE scarcely needs a comment upon these words; They shew very plainly, that, in Job's opinion, the great difference between the righteous and the wicked, as to happiness and misery, consisted in their future expectations.

THOUGH I am quite cast down (says he) and miserable as it is possible almost to be in this life; yet God forbid that I should justify your censures of me, by owning that I have play'd the hypocrite, or been secretly wicked. No, whatever shall befall me, I am resolved that I will still maintain, and still hold fast my integrity— *Let mine enemy be as the wicked; let him flourish and prosper as much as his heart can wish here,* (and he had before shewn that they often do so.) *But what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?* That is, What can he think will become of him after death? What comfort can such an one possibly entertain in the prospect of futurity?

I HAVE put no force upon the words, but rather softened the last branch of the sentence, in respect of what it will bear. For there is plainly a *metonymy*, (as the rhetoricians call the figure) and by the hypocrite having *no hope*, may very reasonably be understood, that he has the most dreadful expectations.

THIS evidently appears to have been Job's meaning, from the following part of the chapter. *Will God bear his cry, (says he) when trouble cometh upon him?*

Ver.



Ver. 9, &c. But particularly from the 20th and following verses, where he describes, in a very lively manner, the horror and distraction of a wicked man upon a death-bed. *Terrors take hold on him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night: the east-wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.* That is, He dies as most wicked men do, in the utmost tumult and confusion.

THERE are other passages in Job's speeches, which if they do not speak so clearly or directly of a future state, yet cannot reasonably be understood in any other sense. Such as that, (Chap. xxvi. 6.) where Job, speaking of the power of God, gives this instance of it amongst others, that *hell* (Heb. *Sbeól*) is *naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.* That is, His power extends even to the region of departed souls; (for this is the usual meaning of *Sbeól* in the Old Testament) to dispose of men there as he sees fitting.

THERE is a parallel text, which may give some light to this, Prov. xv. 11. *Hell and destruction are before the Lord; how much more then the hearts of the children of men?* That is, (if we suppose any connection at all betwixt the former and the latter branch of the sentence) 'As the eye of God penetrates the invisible regions, and every thing there is under his direction; so must the hearts of men lie open to him: that he may judge of their merit or demerit, and award them a recompence accordingly.'

AND in the same way of thinking, Elihu, having observed that *the eyes of God are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings;* immediately adds, *There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* That is, Not death itself shall conceal them from the eye of God, or withdraw them from his justice. Men may flatter themselves with the hope of annihilation, if they please; but they

\* Job xxxiv. 21, 22.

will find themselves most sadly disappointed, when they come to make trial of the other state. *Now* it is an easy thing for prejudiced or careless commentators to explain away the meaning of such a text as this; but the attentive and unbiassed reader will not so easily give it up; who considers that the invisible state is described by Job in these very terms, as a land of darkness and the shadow of death; Chap. x. 21.

We may observe further, that this same thought, which gives, or ought to give, the wicked pain, viz. that the eye of God observes them, and that his power and justice reaches to a future and invisible state, is what Job takes refuge in, as the only source of comfort to him in the depth of his distress.

THERE is a remarkable passage to this purpose, Chap. xxiii. 10, where after expressing the greatest earnestness to come before God, and take his trial; turning himself this way and that way, and as it were feeling after him to find him, but in vain; *Behold I go forward but he is not there: backward, but I cannot perceive him, &c.* He cheers himself at last with this reflection, ver. 10. *But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

If we compare this with the several passages in Job's speeches, where he absolutely despairs of any temporal deliverance, we must of necessity understand it of the hope he entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judgment.

THERE is a passage in the book of Wisdom, which, if not borrowed from this of Job, affords at least a fine illustration of it. Chap. iii. 4—Speaking of the happy lot of good men after death, who had been wretched and afflicted here—*Though they be punished, (says he) in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality: and having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as a burnt-offering.*



I CANNOT omit one or two passages in the last speech of Job, which are remarkable to our purpose. For as he here goes on in a triumphant way, as one who had got the better of the argument; and as he could have no imaginable grounds for triumph, but only in the prospect of another life; there are some strokes in this speech, which cannot well be understood in any other sense.

For instance, in the beginning of the last chapter of this speech, where he declares how circumspect he had been to avoid the occasions and temptations to sin, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, &c.* he adds immediately, *For what is the portion of God from above, and the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? Is it not destruction to the unjust? And a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? And I know that God sees all my ways\**, as he goes on—

Now this very thing, had he meant it of a temporal destruction, was what his antagonists had repeated over and over to him, and had urged it as an argument of his guilt that he was thus miserably destroyed.

When Job therefore says the same thing, viz. that a sure destruction attends the wicked; it is their portion, their inheritance from God; what they have an undoubted title to, and cannot fail of: it is plain that he must understand it in another sense than his antagonists did, viz. of their final retribution in a future state.

So again, ver. 13, 14, of the same chapter, *If I despised the cause of my man servant or my maid servant when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God shall arise? And when he shall visit, what shall I answer him?*

Job here speaks plainly in the future, of something which he was infallibly to expect, had he behaved unjustly to his slave. Whereas could we suppose him to mean it of any temporal judgment or visitation of

\* Chap. xxxi. 1—4.

God, what is it that he had to expect? He seems to think his condition so miserable already, that it was scarce possible for him to fall lower; and therefore he often and earnestly wishes for death, as the happiest thing that could befall him. We need not question therefore, but he had here an eye to the future judgment. And it is remarkable, (as I formerly observed) that he expresses himself in the same phrase as he does, Ch. xix. 25. *Ci jakim El, when God shall arise.*

UPON the whole, whoever carefully examines and compares the passages I have produced, some whereof must of necessity be understood of a future state of reward and punishment, and the others very naturally may be so, at least, (shall I add, and who considers the agreeableness of the notion itself to the reason of mankind, so that it has been justly looked on as a sort of natural dictate) will find no difficulty to believe, that Job was thoroughly persuaded of a future judgment and another state of life.

BUT there is an argument behind, which adds the strongest confirmation to all that has been advanced upon this head; and with it therefore I shall close this section.

WE find God, at the conclusion of the poem, reproving the three friends of Job in the following terms—*For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath.*—And again, commanding them to offer by the hand of Job a burnt-offering for their offence; adding, *and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right like my servant Job.*

THAT this is well translated, spoken of me, and not to me, has been elsewhere shewn †. Here then is a repetition of the same declaration, in express terms, by God himself; that Eliphaz and his companions

\* Chap. xlii. 7, 8. † See. 7.



had not spoken of him the thing that was right, and that Job had.

Now it is impossible to find any thing in their speeches, that should make the difference here supposed, if we set aside the doctrine of a future state. For in this view, the others would really speak more worthily of God than Job, by endeavouring to vindicate his providence in the exact distribution of good and evil here in this life. Whereas Job's assertion, (Ch. ix. 22.) *This is one thing, therefore I said it, he destroyeth the perfect and the wicked,* (which is the argument upon which he all along insists) would, upon this supposition, be directly charging God in the same reproachful terms which Achilles uses towards Agamemnon in Homer; that with him

Εὐ δὲ ἢ τιμὴν ἢ μὲν κακὸς ᾗδ' ἢ ἐσθλός. Il. 9. 399.

THAT he made no distinction betwixt the good and bad, the coward and the brave; which in a ruler is an error that reflects both upon his wisdom and his justice.

BUT now take the other life into the account, and the thing will appear in a quite contrary light; and we shall easily see the reason why God approves of the sentiments of Job, and condemns those of his friends.

FOR supposing the friends of Job to argue, (as it seems to be the general tendency of their arguments) that the righteous are never afflicted without remedy here, nor the wicked prosperous upon the whole in this life (which is a wrong representation of God's providence;) and Job to argue on the other hand, that the righteous are sometimes afflicted here, and that without remedy, but shall be rewarded in a life to come; and that the wicked prosper here, but shall be punished hereafter, (which is the true representation of the divine proceedings) and here is a very apparent difference in the drift of the one's discourse and of the other's. For Job, in this view, speaks worthily of God, the rest unworthily.

THE best moral argument that mankind have ever had to believe a life to come, is this, which Job insists on, that good and evil are for the most part dealt

out

out here promiscuously. On the contrary, the topic urged by the friends, and which they push a great deal too far, that God rewards and punishes in this world, tends in its consequence, (like that other opinion, which was held by the stoics in after times, that virtue is its own reward) to sap the very foundation of that proof we have from reason of another life. No wonder therefore that the sentiments of the one are approved, and of the other condemned.

And taking the matter in this light, I am almost led to conclude, that God, as he bestowed upon Solomon all other temporal advantages in reward for his asking wisdom; so he restored Job to all his temporal prosperity and happiness, and gave him a long enjoyment and encrease of it, as a recompence for his having so well defended the doctrine of a future state.



A Critical





**Critical Dissertation**  
**ON THE**  
**BOOK of JOB.**

## PART III. SECT. I.

N the foregoing part, I have at large considered the words of Job, (Ch. xix.) *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, &c. and have shewn that they express his hopes, not of a temporal deliverance from his afflictions, but of a *future resurrection and a day of judgment.*

Beside examining the text by its own light, I have produced several other passages which corroborate this interpretation of the words, as they deliver to us the same doctrines.

But because it might be thought strange if the book of Job alone afforded intimations of a *future state*, and the other books of the Old Testament were altogether silent in the case; I shall proceed to give some

some proofs from these, that the doctrine was well known and believed by the ancient Jews or Hebrews.

BUT in order to it, it may be necessary in the first place, to remove the prejudices or objections that seem to lie in the way against us; and they are chiefly these—

THAT *temporal rewards and punishments*, and not *future*, were the sanction of the Mosaic law.

THAT the extraordinary providence which the Jews were under, rendered the doctrine of a *future state* less necessary.

THAT had the doctrine of a *future state* been known and believed under the Old Testament, a point of that importance would have been mentioned there more frequently;

AND lastly, in terms more clear and express, and free from all ambiguity.

As to the first of these objections, it is acknowledged, that *temporal rewards and punishments* were the proper sanction of the Mosaic law, as it was the civil or national law of that people; and we find that punishments were inflicted by the civil magistrate on particular persons, according to the nature of their transgression, as in other states and kingdoms.

It is acknowledged likewise, that as the law of Moses was a national covenant entered into by the whole people, and as a people they were bound to the observance of it; in this view, there was a necessity that the promises and threatnings of the law should be of *temporal blessings and judgments*. For nations and societies of men as such, have no existence but in this world, and must be punished or rewarded here, if at all.

AND this is the principal view wherein the law of Moses appears to us all along throughout the Old Testament.

GOD had separated this people from all others to preserve his name and worship amidst an idolatrous world. The one great duty laid upon them was to serve Jehovah their God, the almighty creator and governor of the world, and still adhere to him and worship



worship him. The great sin against which they are perpetually cautioned, is the worshipping and serving other Gods, the Gods of the Heathen round about them. All national blessings are promised to the observance of this duty; and the dreadfulest miseries and distresses threatened to the transgression of it. Read the 28th Chap. of Deuteronomy, you find both the blessings and curses of the law as they are called, delivered in such terms as shew them to be publick, general, national blessings or judgments.

And that the great lawgiver intended they should thus be understood, we have (I think) a remarkable proof in the following chapter, where he summons them together in a general assembly, and admits them into covenant with God both for themselves and their posterity. And in the charge which he delivers upon this occasion, which is very awful and solemn, they are threatened, verse 18. *That if there should be among them, man or woman, or family, or tribe, that should prevaricate in his oath, and at the same time that he swore to Jehovah, have a hankering after other gods, the gods of the nations, &c. (for idolatry is the great crime as well here, as elsewhere, specified) and yet should flatter himself with the hopes of impunity in so doing, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law.\**

— HERE one would think a single person was all along meant. But the following verses shew plainly, that even this denunciation is pointed rather at the people in general, or some revolting tribe or tribes—For thus it follows immediately, verse 22. *So that the gene-*

\* Deut. xxix. 18, 19, 20, 21.

ration to come of your children that shall rise up after you, and the stranger that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, and that the whole land thereof is brimstone and salt, &c. Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers—For they went and served other Gods—And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book.\*

THIS shews clearly that the temporal promises and threats, which are the express sanction of the Mosaic law, regarded chiefly the body of the people; whose great duty was to keep up the worship of the true God in all its purity; and the great sin forbidden them, the forsaking Jehovah, and worshipping strange Gods.

It is yet further observable, that when any particular person fell into idolatry, the punishment was immediately death by the law. This therefore superseded all other temporal plagues or judgments; nor was it possible for any one man to bear in his own person, all that variety of curses that are written in the law, and which we must suppose to be denounced therefore against the national transgression. Neither, indeed, was it possible they could fall into idolatry, publicly at least, but that a great body of them must be concerned; otherwise the many would soon execute the law upon the few.

For as they were all of them bound by the covenant, every man for himself, not to worship other gods; so it appears that they were obliged by the same covenant, as well as by express precepts, to detect and punish it in others. And it is remarkable, that when any one was convicted of idolatry, the body of the people were to execute the law upon him, and to

\* Deut. xxx. 22—27.



stone him with stones, till he died, Deut. xvii. 5, 7. In short, idolatry was neither to be practised, nor yet suffered by them, within their gates, or within the precincts of the inheritance of their tribes, lest it should bring upon the land those miseries, and that desolation which was threatened to the breach of their covenant.

Nothing can give us a juster sense of this matter, than what we find recorded, Josh. xxii. of the alarm presently taken by the other tribes of Israel at the new altar that was erected on the banks of the river Jordan, by the two tribes and half. For as they imagined it to be raised for an idolatrous purpose, they concluded that the punishment due to this breach of the covenant would fall upon themselves as well as on the guilty tribes; and therefore they prepared to oppose it with all their might, and seemed resolved either to reform their brethren, or extirpate them. The solemn embassy that was sent them upon this occasion; the zeal and earnestness with which Phineas expresses his fears, and the fears of the congregation, of their idolatrous purpose in erecting this altar; and the greater zeal and earnestness with which they disclaim it; and indeed the whole narration is a remarkable example of that beautiful simplicity which is so affecting, and so justly admired, but nowhere to be found in such perfection as in the sacred writings.

Now what I meant chiefly to observe, was, the notion which it appears from hence they had entertained, that idolatry, by whomsoever practised, yet if suffered by them, must, as a breach of their covenant, bring down judgments upon the whole nation.

And this (I apprehend) is sufficient to explain that change in the narration in this 20th chapter, which is so remarkable. If *man, or woman, or family, or tribe*, (who were now admitted into this solemn covenant, to have Jehovah alone for their God, as he had taken them to be his people) should nevertheless in their hearts turn after other gods, and after them-

themselves with impunity, though they proceeded to add drunkenness to thirst, (or to wallow in the actual commission of these abominations which they now in their heart covered after) *The anger of the Lord should smite against that man, and all the curses that are written in the book of the law should lie upon him.* But read a little further, and you will find, that *the land* was to be the sufferer on this occasion; and the nations round about are represented as astonished at their calamities.

We see then that the temporal promises and threats, which are the express sanctions of the law, regarded chiefly the body of the people. Whose great duty (as I said) was to keep up the worship of the true God in all its purity; and the sin forbidden them, the forsaking Jehovah and worshipping strange Gods. To the observance of this duty all manner of blessings are promised to be enjoyed by them in the land of Canaan; to the breach of it are threatened an expulsion from the land of Canaan, and all the evils and calamities that can befall a people.

And no wonder that this should be the sanction of the covenant, when the very design of God's entering into covenant with them as a nation or people, and settling them in the land of Canaan, under so strict a ritual of religion, was to preserve the knowledge and worship of himself amidst an idolatrous world. And that there might not be wanting a race of men who should be the keepers of the oracles of God, those revelations which he was pleased to make of himself from the beginning of the world to the time of Christ; and which are now at this time the standing evidences to christianity; preserved by a wonderful providence (blessed be God!) for those honest minds, who will be at the pains to study them.

And this may help us, in the next place, to a right understanding of that extraordinary providence which the Jews were under. For as the covenant was made with them as a nation or people; so was the extraordinary providence extended over them as a people; as appears from the whole tenour of their



history: their desolations and captivities foretold; and their deliverances sometimes wrought by a miracle; the hand of God appearing visibly (as it were) in every thing that befell them. And indeed, the very preservation of them as a people for above fifteen hundred years, from the time of Moses to Christ; under all the vicissitudes they underwent, was an instance of providence so extraordinary, that it is not to be paralleled in the history of any other nation; nor to be matched by any thing, but what has since happened to themselves; I mean the preservation of the poor remnant of them to this day: but no longer as a national society; no longer as a state or kingdom settled in the land of Canaan. The covenant with them as a republick, or as a separate people, is long since expired: the great ends of providence intended by it have been obtained, we may say, in spite of them. And their own blindness and stupidity drove them from the land of Canaan, when the divine wisdom had no further business for them there: nor must they ever hope again to obtain it, so as to set up their ritual observances there; which have long been out of season, and which, nevertheless, they are still so fond of.

The extraordinary providence then over the Jewish state or people till the coming of Christ; (that is, for as long as God intended to continue them a distinct people, separated by their religion from all the rest of the world, in short, as long as the national covenant subsisted) seems to be a point unquestionable. It is what the nature of the thing required, and what their history confirms. But then this extraordinary providence to the state does by no means include or infer an equal providence to particular persons, so as that they should be always punished or rewarded here in this world, in proportion to their good or ill deserts; which is the only thing that can supersede the necessity of the belief of the doctrine of a *future state*.

I deny not, but that extraordinary deliverances might be sometimes wrought for private persons, as well as signal examples of divine justice made; especially in the case of idolatry, or such crimes as reflected a dishonour on their religion, under an economy where God declares himself a jealous God, and tender of his honour. But this is not the question at present; but whether the general conduct of providence, with regard to particular persons, within the precincts of the land of Canaan, was totally different from what it has been observed to be in all other places, and that in all ages; whether prosperity and adversity were so equally distributed among them, as to discriminate the good and bad, and this in proportion to their good or ill deserts.

So far from it, that the effects of this extraordinary providence to the state, viz. national blessings, and national judgments, seem plainly inconsistent with the notion of an equal providence exactly administered to particular persons: because the bad will always have their share in the national prosperity; and the good, probably, more than their share in the national calamities. And thus historians have observed, that the bravest suffer most in war; and the best men in a plague; the courage of the one, and charity of the other, usually exposing them to greater hazards and dangers than ordinary men experience.

In fact we find, that the history of this people is as clear for no equal providence to particular persons, as it is for an extraordinary providence to the state.

In an equal providence, exactly administering temporal rewards and punishments to the good and bad, had obtained under the Mosaic dispensation; the prophets of God, surely, must have been the happiest persons in the world. But how are they described in the history? Why as continually exposed to troubles and vexations; fears and persecutions; the very nature of their office (like that of the apostles in the New Testament) laying a necessity upon them of



being the foremost in undergoing difficulties and dangers.

11 READ the story of the great Elijah; and in all that is recorded of his life, you see little else beside the miracles which he performed, and the distresses which he underwent: driven from place to place, without any fixed or certain habitation; fed by the charity of a poor widow, and the immediate hand of heaven; and at length reduced to that state of weariness and disgust of life, that he requested for himself that he might die; and said, *It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.* 1 Kings xix. 4.

WE will suppose him, all this while, to have enjoyed as much inward consolation as his condition could admit; as no doubt but he felt all the satisfaction that a pious, brave, and good man could, in such distressed circumstances. But was there any thing in the visible state of this prophet, that should render it desirable, or confirm the Jews in the belief of such an equal providence as is contended for; exactly administering temporal rewards and punishments to particular persons? No—But there was something in the glorious conclusion of his labours, that tended to confirm them in the belief of a doctrine much more comfortable to good men, and highly seasonable at that time to be confirmed by this extraordinary evidence; the doctrine of a *future state* of life. For this great prophet, after all his labours here, was taken up in a visible and triumphant manner into heaven, (2 Kings ii. 11.) The Jews then saw plainly, that he had not his reward in this life: and God took him from them in that miraculous manner, to let them see, (no doubt) that there was a reward to be expected in a life to come.

11 If it be objected, that the prophets might be an exception to the equal providence, because they were acquainted with the doctrine of a *future state*; but not the body of the people; here too we need only appeal to the history: for do but read the prophets them-

themselves, and see how they describe the state of things amongst them; and you will find, that there is scarce any one sin more frequently charged upon that people, than the violent perversion of justice, and the oppression of the helpless and innocent by the wicked and the great. So like is the history of the Jews in this respect to that of other people; and so strange therefore is the comment upon that complaint of Jeremiah: *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* &c. "that it was in his time" "this inequality of providence first struck their observation."\*

It were easy to confirm what has been said by the suffrage of the apostle to the Hebrews, who in his 11th chapter presents us with a catalogue of worthies; no less famed for suffering, than for doing great things; and this without the least distinction of those who lived before, or under the law: so that it is evident the apostle could have no notion of an equal providence under the Mosaic dispensation. The faith he there describes and exemplifies, is quite another thing than the expectation of temporal advantages. It was such a faith as could enable them to bear the very worst of temporal evils. And this (sure) must be the belief of another state of life; the expectation of some better country, even an heavenly, as he says in one place; the hopes of a better resurrection, as he calls it in another—

Such a faith as this, indeed, and no other, was to the purpose of the apostle's argument: for his design throughout this whole epistle is to animate the converted Jews or Hebrews to a strict adherence to the gospel, under all the persecutions they might undergo, and a patient waiting for the coming of our Saviour Christ to judgment, when they should receive a glorious recompence for all their labours and sufferings. And as he knew the examples of their ancestors would be of great weight with them, he



here shews them, that all those excellent persons, who are mentioned with so much honour in the Old Testament, recommended themselves to the favour of God, by just such a faith as their christianity exacted from them; a belief of something future and invisible; in short, the happiness of another life: and this built upon a divine promise too, just as the Christian faith is: nay, more he tells them at the conclusion of the chapter, that these excellent persons had not yet received the glorious reward that was promised them, but must wait for it till the coming of our Saviour Christ to judgment, when both they and Christians should be glorified together. Verse 39, 40. *These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; that is, the reward promised them: God having provided some better thing for us; (Οὗτος τις ἡμῶν ἐκτίσσει καὶ ἀποδοθήσεται, God foreseeing and intending some better thing concerning us, viz.) that they without us should not be made perfect.*

FROM what has been said it appears, how easy it were to reverse the grand argument, No knowledge of a future state under the Mosaic dispensation, therefore an equal providence. And to put it thus—No equal providence to particular persons under the Mosaic dispensation, therefore some knowledge of a future state. And thus much for the second prejudice or objection.

BUT still it is urged, Had the doctrine of a future state been generally known and believed under the Old Testament; a point of that importance would have been mentioned there more frequently.

NOW though it appears to me, that the doctrine is there frequently mentioned or alluded to; yet were it otherwise, there are so many strong presumptions on this side of the question, that a less frequent or apparent mention of it might be well accounted satisfactory. Some of these shall be produced in the following section.

IN the mean time, we may ask, How frequently would they have it mentioned? Perhaps it may be thought

thought by some, that if the doctrine of a *future state* had been the popular belief among the Jews, it ought to fill both pages of the bible; and that the persons, whose history is there recorded, ought to have been represented as perpetually and apparently living and acting by the motives of it. But to this we may reply, That though there is no doubt, but persons, who seriously believe another life, will be influenced by it in their general conduct; yet, whether they may appear to be so, is another question. There is no one who reads Homer, that can doubt, whether a *future state* were the popular belief among the Greeks in the times he writes of. And yet, by what I remember of him, I believe it would be difficult to produce six instances, in all his poems, of any action either entered upon or avoided, from the express motive of the rewards or punishments to be expected in the other world—

It has been observed as something remarkable in the book of Esther, (a book of a competent length, for it contains ten chapters) that in all the history there recorded, though it presents us with a great variety of occurrences respecting the Jews particularly, both private and national dangers and deliverances; yet the name of God is not so much as mentioned in all the book. Should we conclude from hence, that they were grown at this time a set of atheists?

It is sufficient to our purpose then, if we show the Doctrine of a *future state* to have been plainly taught in the Old Testament, in the books of Moses particularly, so as that the ancient Jews might have it, whether it be mentioned frequently or rarely.

THE last objection is, that were the doctrine of a *future state* the popular belief under the Old Testament, we should have found it there delivered in terms more clear and express, and free from all ambiguity.

In answer to which, I must observe, that a regard is to be had to the genius of the language wherein the  
Old



Old Testament is written: and if the doctrine be there delivered in terms as free from ambiguity as the language will bear, this ought to be admitted as satisfactory.

To illustrate this by an example: there are no compound verbs in the Hebrew; if therefore you were to introduce God as saying, I kill and I revive, or raise again to life; you could only express it in the words of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 39. *ani amith va-achajeb, I kill, and I make alive.* The deficiency however, seems to be supplied by the very placing of the words; and to make alive, after killing, is plainly to raise to life again. This at least it should signify to an Hebrew, in whose language *to live*, for want of a compound verb, must serve to express *to live again*.

But whatever deficiencies there may be in the language, I hope to shew that it is clear enough as to the point in question; and only desire it may be supposed, that the ancient Jews or Hebrews perfectly understood the language of the Old Testament, (a very reasonable supposition, since it was the very language which they spoke) and that they used to read, or hear it read to them; and this too was always encouraged amongst them; (and as to the books of Moses, was provided for, I think, by an express

\* A remarkable instance of this we have, 2 Kings xiii. 21. where the dead man, who was thrown by accident into the sepulchre of Elisha, as soon as he touched the prophet's bones, miraculously revived, and stood upon his feet. The sacred historian has no other word for revived, but the simple verb, *jechi, lived*.

So in other places, the words connected with it in the sentence, shew plainly that this word must be understood of a resurrection. For example, Ps. lxxi. 20. *Thou which hast shown me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, (tashub techajeni) and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth, (mit-tehomoth ha-aretz).* It follows indeed, *Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.* But supposing the whole to mean no more than a temporal deliverance and greatness; yet whence the origine of the phrase? Does not the allusion intimate thus much? Thou who hast promised to deliver me from the grave, or from *Sheol*; and to vouchsafe me a joyful resurrection; canst easily deliver me from my present troubles, or promote me to honour and power here.

law) and then I am sure they could not be ignorant of the doctrine of a *future state*; because it is interwoven with the very language of the book.

AND this I shall endeavour to make appear to the English reader, as far as the nature of the thing will bear.

BUT as a previous step, having thus fairly considered the objections on the one hand, I must now take leave to offer a few things, which seem to me to be strong presumptions (as I said) on the other side of the question.

## SECTION II.

THE doctrine of a *future state* is generally allowed to have been the popular belief among all the Heathen nations of the world, and this from time immemorial.

THE great Roman orator and philosopher who tells us, that "they had the consent of all nations with them in their belief of the soul's subsisting after death," says likewise, "that they had the authority of all antiquity for the same opinion".

THIS therefore affords a good argument of its being a truth delivered down from the beginning; and this again a strong presumption, that the Jews were not without it. Since all the primitive doctrines of religion, as well as the history of the world from its creation, were better preserved amongst these, than amongst any other people.

INDEED the only difference in the present case, that I can perceive, betwixt the Jews and other nations, was this, that these last had taken the liberty to add a great many fabulous circumstances to this article of their creed; the Jews being under a stricter discipline could add nothing to theirs, but as their prophets

*Permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium.*

*Auctoribus quidem ad istam sententiam uti optimis possumus—et primum quidem omni antiquitate—Tusc. Disp. p. 27. Edit. Davies.*

from



from time to time gave them a new light into it. So that in the one we may observe the simplicity of truth; in the other all the wild variety of error and imagination.

AGAIN, it has been allowed, that the doctrine of a *future state* was known to Abraham, and the patriarchs, and to Moses. This therefore affords a good presumption that the Israelites in general were not unacquainted with it. For we find Abraham in particular commended for a disposition to train up *his children and household in the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. that is, to instruct them in the doctrines and precepts of religion. But we never read that either the patriarchs or Moses had any command, or even a permission, to conceal any doctrines from the people. Much less a doctrine of so high importance to their welfare, both publick and private. We have reason therefore to conclude, that Moses would instruct the Israelites in all that he knew himself, relating to the doctrine of a *future state*.

To allow that the people were instructed in it in proportion as they were capable of it, is to allow that they were universally instructed in it; at least in the general doctrine. For of this sure, all mankind are capable. Unless it be a thing above vulgar capacities to apprehend so plain a truth as this; that God, who gave us one life, can with the same ease bestow upon us another, an immortal one, if he please, either in happiness or misery. For there is no need of entring into any abstruse or subtle speculations about the nature of the soul, in order to be satisfied of the doctrine of another life. In fact, we find the most illiterate and barbarous nations have been in possession of this doctrine; and had the Israelites a grosser understanding than all these?

AGAIN, supposing the law of Moses were established upon temporal sanctions, which I have shewn in what sense it must be allowed; yet the promises of God made before the law were not annulled by it, nor could the revelations of another life be thereby

obliterated. The book of Genesis, and all the other books of Moses, were written for the instruction of the people, as well as the xxth chapter of Exodus; and if the doctrine of a *future state* is not to be found in the decalogue, yet it may be in the pentateuch. Sure I am, our Saviour fetched it thence; and therefore sure I am it must be there. *Now that the dead are raised* (says he) *even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, Luke xx. 37.*

HERE the very relation wherein God was pleased to stand to these good men, does, in the construction of our blessed master, suppose or imply a *future state* of life. And how indeed should it be otherwise; since this very relation oftentimes exposes men to great dangers and distresses here in this life? This was the case of Abraham in particular; from whence the apostle to the Hebrews justly infers his belief of another life.

*By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.*

*For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* An heavenly city and country, as he presently explains it.

THIS by the way, is not putting a spiritual sense upon the words of the Old Testament, but strict reasoning from the facts recorded there.

AND if we may be allowed to reason in the same way, I think there will be no great difficulty in proving that the body of the Israelites in Moses's time, believed a *future state of life*. Or at least, that they might have learned it, if they would, from the Mosaic history.

FOR to give a brief representation of it—We find their great law-giver in the first place acquainting them with the original dignity of their nature, that they were made *in the likeness of God*, Gen. i. 26. An expression, that gives no obscure hint of the immortality



ality of the soul. Then informing them of the transgression and fall of our first parents, which brought sin and death into the world.

But that it might not be thought that either they or their posterity were left without hope when they had thus sinned; the sentence passed upon them is recorded, Gen. iii. And therein appears evidently a mixture of mercy, and a gleam of hope vouchsafed them, in the seed of the woman, verse 15. which contains the first prophecy of our Saviour. And which, how obscure soever, was a foundation for the worshippers of God all along to expect some great person under that character; as appears from another remarkable prophecy, (either not so well understood, or not so strongly urged and insisted on as it ought to be) where a name is given him of the same import with the first, viz. *Her Seed*, or the seed of the woman. For this is the plain English of the word *Skilob* or *Skilah*, Gen. xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Skilob come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

THE Hebrew word שִׁילֹב *Skil*, signifies a child. And the ך, a feminine affix added to it, makes שִׁילָה, in the usual way of pronunciation, *Skilah*, her child.

The English word *child* seems to be derived from the Hebrew, *Skil*. There is but one other place where the word occurs, and there too with a little variation, viz. *Shiliathah*, instead of *Skilah*, Deut. xxviii. 37. where, amongst the calamities threatened to the breach of their covenant, the great law-giver tells them, they should be reduced to such extremities in their sieges, that the women should eat their own children. The eloquence of the description is particularly observable: *The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter; she shall hate Shiliathah, and towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet*—meaning, no doubt, her infant newly born. The word is used in Chaldee for the *Secundine*; and the derivation of it is remarkable from שָׁלָה *Shalah*, *salvum esse, to be safe*. And probably it was this idea of safety or salvation annexed to the word, that might determine the use of it in this prophecy, viz. *Skilah*, rather than *benab* or *marab*.

But as it is pointed *Shilab*, and the *o* carries in it a masculine sound, our Ainsworth explains the mystery thus; "The Hebrew hath an unusual manner of writing, implying his son and her son, as a prophecy that he should be of Mary the virgin, and of the lineage of Judah." Ainsworth in loc.

HOWEVER this be, the Jews themselves have ever acknowledged this for a prophecy of the Messiah; at least, the opinion is as old as the Targums. But what I quoted this text for, is to shew, that even in old Jacob's time they had not forgot the first promise of a Redeemer, but built their hopes upon it, as appears from the name here given him exactly correspondent with the other. For זרע *Zaryah*, Gen. iii. 15. And שילב *Shilab*, here, equally denote her seed or off-spring. And this makes it probable that they understood that other promise of a seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, of some one great person likewise. Of a seed, and not seeds, as the apostle of the gentiles distinguishes, Gal. iii. 16.

To proceed—The institution of sacrifices, a way of worship which we find practised very soon after the fall, not only throws great light upon the first promise of a Redeemer; but shews, by the very nature of the thing, that there was a way open'd for mankind to the divine favour and reconciliation: but to what purpose? That the worshippers of God, who would embrace this offered mercy, might enjoy a longer and a happier life here than others? No certainly—The first example of religious worship recorded in the Bible, must have taught them another lesson. For the innocent Abel no sooner had his sacrifice accepted by God, than he was made a sacrifice himself by his wicked brother. Well therefore might the apostle say, (Heb. xi. 4.) that *he being dead yet speaketh*; for the story, as recorded by Moses, spoke then to the Israelites, and will speak loudly to the world's end, for the doctrine of a future state; as long as this plain truth shall be acknowledged amongst men, that the favour of God imports happiness.



WE have another remarkable example in the very next chapter, of one, who as a reward of his faith and piety, (called in the language of Scripture, his walking with God) was miraculously *translated that he should not see death; for God took him*, (Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5.) There is no doubt but his contemporaries had some visible or sensible demonstration of this fact. And as the fate of Abel was an argument to their reason, so the translation of Enoch was a proof to their senses (as it were) of another *state of life*.

By the following part of the history we find that there had been all along before the flood, a succession of religious worshippers of the true God, dignified with the high title of the *sons of God*, (Gen. vi. 2.) And when these too had corrupted themselves, and mankind were become desperately and incorrigibly wicked, the flood was introduced to purge the world; and Noah and his family preserved to begin the human race again from a new stock. When these again degenerated, and the world was over-run with idolatry, the call of Abraham succeeded; new revelations were made to him; and a solemn covenant vouchsafed him, with an express promise, to be a *God to him, and to his seed after him*, (Gen. xvii. 7.) A relation, which, taken in its full extent, comprehends the whole duty and happiness of man; what is elsewhere expressed in that command to Abraham, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, (Gen. xvii. 1.) And that assurance given him by the same Almighty Being, *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward*, (Gen. xv. 1.)

THE seed of Abraham therefore, if they rightly understood this covenant, together with the general history of the world, could not but look upon themselves as a select people, saved out of the ruins of mankind. I mean, as restored to the divine favour, which had been forfeited by the first transgression, and readmitted to the hopes of happiness in another state of life.

AND Moses seems to me to have taken a great deal of pains to make them rightly understand their privileges

leges in this respect; and what sort of a conduct it must be, that must qualify them for that *future happiness*; by directing them to a *circumcision of the heart*, (Deut. x. 16.) as the true intention of the Abrahamic covenant, of which the outward circumcision was the seal; and by endeavouring to instil into them right and worthy notions of the Deity, the great pattern of all perfection; and requiring them to *love the Lord their God with all their heart, and soul, and might*, (Deut. vi. 5.) as a Being infinitely high and holy, the great Creator and Governor of the world: *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.* As God proclaims his own name and attributes, (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) In other places they are told, that *the heaven, and the heaven of heavens was the Lord their God's, as well as the earth and all that is therein*, (Deut. x. 14.) intimating, that he had all the happiness of heaven and earth at his disposal, to reward his worshippers. To him therefore they are exhorted to adhere, and to prefer his service before all things. And are not only told that their life or death depended on it, but, in a strain of Divinity very high and very edifying, that *God himself was their life and the length of their days*, (Deut. xxx. 20.) They are exhorted moreover to consider themselves not only as the people of God, but as an *holy people*, his *chosen*, his *peculiar people*, (Deut. xiv. 2.) that is, (for it is a phrase perhaps that requires to be explained) a people he regarded as his treasure; saved, as I said, out of the ruins of mankind, and that not only to serve the ends of his providence here, but to be trained up for a *future state of blessedness*. And therefore they are put in mind, that their chief wisdom consisted in *considering their latter end*, (Deut. xxxii. 29.) or looking forward to that other state of life, and endeavouring to prepare themselves for it by a sincere piety and obedience to the will of God.



SURE I am, that these and the like passages which we meet with in the books of Moses, that of Deuteronomy especially, admit a juster and a nobler sense, upon a supposition that the people were acquainted with the doctrine of a *future state*, than the contrary.

I MEAN not by this to decline the proof of the thing; for I hope to shew, that they had it. It may not be amiss however, to review some of these texts and phrases a little more distinctly in their native dress; and see what light they may afford towards determining the point before us.

### S E C T. III.

IT is very remarkable, in what strong terms Moses sets before the Israelites life and death, as the consequences of their obedience or their disobedience to the laws of God. But that they might not rest in a mere external obedience, (much less in an observance of the ritual precepts only) he describes it by internal characters, such as the circumcision of the heart, and that love and fear of God, which is the solid principle of all virtue and goodness.

THUS Deut. xxx. 6. a return from their captivities is described with this particular circumstance; *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

So again, verse 15. *See I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil: in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, and to walk in his ways, &c.* And again, verse 19. with a very solemn attestation; *I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore chuse life.*

THE question is, What that life is, which is here set before them, as the certain consequence of their loving the Lord their God, and walking in his ways. To those who were acquainted with the history of the fall, one

one would think it should naturally suggest a recovery of that life and immortality, which was then forfeited, either in the *present* or some *future state*; and in a future state, since they saw death was inevitable.

BUT if our Saviour's answer to the lawyer, (Luke x.) may be admitted as a good comment upon these texts, it is past all doubt that eternal life must be here meant: for thus the question is put, verse 25. *And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* Upon our Saviour's referring him to the law of Moses for direction, verse 26. *What is written in the law? How readest thou?* he presently cites the two great precepts of the law, which are as an epitome of the whole; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul— And thy neighbour as thyself,* verse 27. Upon which he receives this short solution to his question, *Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

THERE are several things in this passage well worthy our attention. As *first*, The enquiry is here, plainly, how to attain *eternal life*— Our Saviour's referring him to the law, that is, the books of Moses, for instruction, shews, that even these were not destitute of the proposed reward of *everlasting life*, nor of the proper directions for attaining it. The man's citing the great precepts of the *love of God with all the heart, and of their neighbour as themselves*; shews him to have well understood that point to which Moses fixes the promise of life in its most proper and exalted sense, *viz.* a true inward and substantial righteousness, which he expresses by *loving God with all the heart and soul and mind, and walking in his ways*. Our Saviour's telling him, that he had answered right, is a further confirmation of it; and his adding, *this do, and thou shalt live*, instead of, *thou shalt live eternally*, shews, that to live, or to live for ever, in the present question, meant the same thing. And the whole passage, taken together, affords a most convincing proof, that the life, so often and so earnestly



set before the Israelites by Moses, as the consequence of their obedience to the laws of God, and the death so often threatened to their disobedience, cannot be meant of a mere temporal life or death, but must have respect to something future, and eternal.

THERE is no doubt, but when the Gospel was once published, a christian faith was necessary, as the condition of salvation. But before the blessed Jesus came into the world, no other faith could be required, than such as was suited to the then state of the Jews; a belief of their own Scriptures, and of what Moses and the prophets had foretold: in a word, such a belief in God, as the love of God comprehends and implies; which, together with a suitable behaviour, must entitle them to eternal life. And this therefore, it is reasonable to suppose, was meant by Moses, when he says, *Thou shalt love, serve, obey God, or walk in his ways that thou mayest live.*

BUT to this it may be objected, that Moses himself seems to explain it otherwise; by so often fixing down the promise of life and length of days to the land of Canaan, the land that was promised to their forefathers; where they should enjoy great temporal blessings, if they observed their covenant; and are threatened with the worst of evils, and an expulsion from that land again, if they transgressed it. Even in the passages abovesited, where life and death are so strongly urged, there is mention of *prolonging their days in the land whither they were going over Jordan to possess it, and being blessed and multiplied there*—

NOW all this will admit of an easy solution, if it be considered, that Moses here speaks to the people in a double capacity, both as a community and as individuals, and as under a twofold law or covenant, viz. the national (which is strictly the Mosaic) and another covenant subsisting long before it, but renewed with Abraham, and so with Isaac and Jacob, the ancestors of this people, and often referred to by Moses as still obligatory upon them. And if the national covenant was established upon temporal sanctions only, yet the pro-

promises annexed to this other covenant were of a nature spiritual and eternal. No wonder therefore, that we find the great lawgiver in this and his other exhortations, most commonly mixing the temporal blessings with the future; and proposing to them life and death, blessing and cursing, in that twofold sense which the very nature of the thing requires.

IN short, it is as easy to observe, as it is of importance to distinguish, a double system of religion set before the Israelites under the Old Testament: the one respecting them as a nation or people, subject to peculiar laws, and an external ritual of religion, that separated them from all the world, and which was to continue still in force as long as such a separation was necessary; and to this, or to this chiefly (as I apprehend) belong the temporal sanctions of reward and punishment. The other respecting them as individuals, capable of high improvements in virtuous habits, such as might fit them for a better state hereafter: and this requires other sanctions than the temporal ones, as it aims at quite another sort of happiness.

It was but too common with the Jews all along to rest in the external and ritual part of their religion, and to neglect the internal, moral, and substantial part of it. And therefore we find the prophets frequently recalling them to a more strict observance of these weightier matters of the law. It was their error and infatuation in the time of Christ and his apostles, (I might add, that it is so to this day) to think their law, as a national law, was to remain in force for ever; that the ritual part of it, the partition-wall (as St. Paul calls it) was still to be kept up; and that none were to be admitted to the full privileges of God's people, but by being circumcised, and obliging themselves to the observance of the law in all its parts. And it is this that drew from the apostle all those disparaging expressions of the law, meaning the national law, and their covenant too, as a national covenant; at the same time that he acknowledges another covenant subsisting, established upon better promises,



mises, which that law *could not disannull*, (Gal. iii. 17.) and which, as it was made long before it, so it should continue after it, even to the end of time : a covenant (in short) founded in the promise of a Redeemer, and of eternal life in him ; by which the worshippers of the true God were all along admitted into favour and reconciliation with him, and the hopes of a better state hereafter, such as might compensate all the difficulties and hardships they were liable to undergo in the discharging of their duty here in this.

IT is of the national law undoubtedly that St. Paul speaks, Gal. iii. 21. where he intimates, that no such *law was given* that could have a power to *give life*. How should it ? Since a national law is, in the very nature of it, a mere external thing, designed to regulate the external actions, and therefore can be no adequate rule of righteousness— *not made for a righteous man*, as the apostle says expressly, (1 Tim. i. 9.) but intended as a check to wickedness— *made for the lawless and disobedient, for ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane*.

NEVERTHELESS, that the Israelites were all along under another law, such as was a rule of righteousness for good men, we learn from the same apostle, Rom. viii. 4. where he speaks expressly of a *righteousness of the law*, *δικαιοσύνη το νόμου*, to be fulfilled by Christians, who *walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit*— The apostle, surely, could not mean this of the national law of the Jews, which he every where pronounces to be no longer obligatory. He must mean it therefore of that law of true internal righteousness, to which all were subject, who were in covenant with God from the first promise of a Redeemer to fallen man, and which through the merciful terms of that covenant should entitle them to eternal life.

WHEN Moses therefore exacts from the people this internal righteousness, and proposes life as the reward of it ; What can be more reasonable than to understand him of that life in its most excellent sense, that life eternal, which is promised in the Gospel up-

on

on the very same condition? I say, upon the very same condition. For I suppose none can be so weak as to believe, that the circumcision of the heart required by Moses, *the loving God with all the heart, and walking in his ways*, can proceed from any other principle than that of faith. And faith working by love, or a sincere obedience (internal and external) to the will of God, proceeding from a true and lively faith, is the condition of salvation to us now under the Gospel.

THE objects of our faith, indeed, may be more enlarged, or seen in a better light, than they were under the Old Testament: but still faith in God, his promises and revelations, was as necessary to good men then, as it is to us: and that they lived and acted all along upon this principle, is most certain; and the proof of it is the subject of an entire chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *viz.* Chap. xi.

I MENTION this the rather to shew, that the controversy, so fully handled by St. Paul throughout his Epistles, concerning *justification by faith without the deeds of the law*, is entirely beside the present question; since good men, as well under the law as before it, lived by faith as much as we do; and therefore had the same claim to eternal life that we have, if that is to be the portion of believers.

NAY more, it appears from this very remarkable chapter from whence I have drawn the several quotations in the beginning of this section, *viz.* Deut. xxx. from verse 1. to the 6th, that the Israelites had a promise of the great Gospel privileges, (such as their national law and covenant had nothing to do with) a full pardon of their sins upon repentance, and the grace of the holy Spirit to enable them to fulfill their duty\*. Whence again it is obvious to conclude, that

\* Deut. xxx. 1.—6. *And it shall come to pass—when thou shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice, &c.—that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee—And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*



the life here spoken of means the Gospel-life and immortality.

ALL this appeared so certain to a very learned writer †, deeply read and studied in these points, that he argues from hence, that the covenant, renewed by Moses with the people, and described in this and the foregoing chapter, was not the *Horeb* or mount Sinai covenant, but the ancient Abrahamic covenant, which was the same with the Christian.

AND though I cannot be of opinion with this great man, that the Abrahamic covenant alone was here renewed; for I think it appears, from a mixture of the temporal promises with the spiritual, that it was in effect a renewal of both covenants; yet that it was so of the Abrahamic, appears evident from Ch. xxix. 12, 13. *That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.*

HERE the covenant with Abraham is expressly mentioned— And the very terms of the everlasting covenant, to be a God to him and to his seed after him, (Gen. xvii. 7.) repeated in a similar phrase, *that he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God*— A relation, (as I observed) which comprehends in it every thing respecting either the duty or the happiness of men.

IF the reader desires a further proof of the Abrahamic covenant being here renewed, I must refer him to the learned prelate's arguments at large \*. (*Harm. Apost.*)

† Bishop Bull— See his *Harm. Apostol. Diss. poster. Cap. 11.*

\* Amongst other things the bishop observes, that the new covenant foretold by Jeremiah, (Chap. xxxi. 33.) *This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, &c.* (which, as appears from Heb. viii. 8. was no other than the Christian covenant)

*Apostol. Dissert. poster. cap. 11. p. 77, 78. Fol. Edit.)*

But the reason which he gives for the renewal of it, deserves to be well attended to, and therefore I shall here insert it.

‘ I have dwelt † the longer on these points, (says this great divine) that from hence it might appear, that every thing contained in the writings of Moses does not appertain to the Mosaic covenant properly so called; and how true therefore, as well as necessary, that distinction of St. Austin is, (which I have sometimes mentioned) that restrains the old law, strictly taken, to that covenant alone which was made in mount Sinai; but more especially that from hence might be seen in a clear light, the supreme wisdom and goodness of that œconomy God thought fit to use in dispensing the covenant of his grace.

is an exact counterpart of this covenant made by Moses with the Israelites in the plains of Moab.

So that the prophet Jeremiah may be considered as a good commentator upon Moses, (and such, indeed, are all the prophets) and the apostle to the Hebrews upon both.

† *In his ideo prolixius immorati sumus, tum ut vel hinc manifestum fieret, omnia quæ in Moisaicis scriptis continentur, ad fœdus Moisaicum, proprie sic dictum, nequaquam pertinere, adeoque quam vera ac prorsus necessaria sit distinctio Augustini (de qua aliquoties jam dictum est) Legem veterem æquæ sumptam ad solum pactum in monte Sinai factum restringentis; tum imprimis ut exinde etiam clare eluceret optima ac sapientissima Dei provisa, quam in dispensando gratiæ suæ fœdere usurpare visum ipsi fuerit. Pepigerat Deus cum Abrahamo fœdus illud gratiosum multis ante latam legem annis; cui postea placuit ipsi superaddere pactum aliud, et multis, usque operosis, ritibus ac ceremoniis conflatum, quibus rudem et carnalem Abrahami posteritatem, recens ex Egypto eductam, adeoque Paganicis ritibus ac superstitionibus nimis addictam, in officio contineret, i. e. ab Ethnicorum idolatræ cultu arceret. Quod optime expressit Tertullianus (adversus Marcion. 2.) his verbis: Sacrificiorum onera, &c. sed prævidens sapientissimus Deus, fore, ut hoc ipsius propositum populus obtusi pectoris non intelligeret, post latam istam carnalem legem, præcipit Moysi, ut Israelitis novum fœdus promulgaret, seu potius ut vetus illud cum Abrahamo ante multos annos initum (quod spirituales imprimis iustitiam exigebat, et gratia ac misericordia plenum erat) renovaret: ut hinc tandem cognoscerent Judæi, pactum Abrahamicum etiam post latam legem rituales adhuc vixisse, adeoque pro fœdere habendum fuisse, cui unice salus ipsorum inniteretur. Conf. Gal. iii. 17. Quis hic cum Apostolo non exclamet: Ο βαδός, ο δούλος, ο σοφίας, ο γυνώσκων; Ο ι. Rom. xi. 33.*

‘God



' God had made that gracious covenant with Abraham many years before the giving of the law ; to  
 ' which it pleased him afterwards to superadd another  
 ' covenant made up of many operose rites and ceremonies by which the rude and carnal posterity of  
 ' Abraham, newly brought out of Egypt, and so too  
 ' much addicted to the Pagan rites and superstitions,  
 ' might be contained within their duty, and preserved  
 ' from the idolatrous worship of the Heathen.—  
 ' But the all-wise God foreseeing, that a people so  
 ' gross of understanding might not thoroughly perceive his purpose herein, after establishing this carnal law, commanded Moses to promulge a new covenant with the Israelites, or rather to renew the  
 ' old one made with Abraham many years before,  
 ' which exacted a spiritual righteousness above all  
 ' things, and was full of grace and mercy ; that from  
 ' hence at length the Jews might know that the  
 ' Abrahamic covenant was still in force, even after  
 ' the establishment of the ritual law, and so was to  
 ' be esteemed as the covenant on which alone depended their salvation. Compare Gal. iii. 17. Who  
 ' (adds the bishop) can forbear crying out here with  
 ' the apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !* Rom. xi. 33.

By the words, *ut hinc tandem cognoscerent Judæi, that from hence at length the Jews might know or learn, &c.* I suppose the good bishop meant the Jews in the apostles days—But if these might learn so much from it, it is not to be supposed that the Israelites, in Moses's days, could be ignorant of the true intention of that covenant, into which they were thus solemnly admitted.

For what good end could possibly be served by entering them into a covenant at all, if they were to be still left in the dark as to the terms of it ?

If the people of Israel then were here admitted by Moses into the Abrahamic covenant, renewed with them so publickly and expressly, and this be the same with the Christian ; they were undoubtedly admitted to a covenant of life and immortality, and there-

therefore could not be ignorant of the doctrine of a *future state*.

AND here again is another controversy discarded, which we are under no necessity to trouble ourselves about, *viz.* How far the body of the people, in Moses's time or after, might, or might not understand the typical reference of the Mosaic institutions. For though it be highly probable that they were taught, and did understand some of them at least; yet we have no need to seek a refuge, in the present case, in types and shadows; or to lay any stress upon the land of Canaan's being a type of heaven, or the spiritual blessings of the Gospel being obumbrated under the temporal promises of the law. The point seems clear enough, that if an evangelical righteousness be here demanded as the condition of this covenant, the life here promised must be meant in an evangelical sense, of the happiness of a *future life*, and not this *present*.

AND this will help us to a better understanding of many passages in the Old Testament, where the word *life* occurs; and should make us cautious how we take up a loose principle, which some learned men appear but too fond of, as if words were used in one sense by Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament, in another by our blessed Lord and his apostles in the New: or as if, in citing passages of Scripture, they used to give a meaning to the text that was not originally there. Whereas there are not any two books in the world betwixt which there is a greater harmony of sense or expression than betwixt the Old Testament and the New. And how indeed should it be otherwise! since the same adorable scheme of providence for the salvation of mankind is carried on through both; and they were equally given by the inspiration of the one omnipotent and omniscient being, who *declarath the end from the beginning*, (as the prophet speaks) Isa xlii. 10.) and *whose wisdom reacheth from one end to another*, (both of space and time) and *sweetly orders all things*, (Wisd. viii. 1.



## S E C T. IV.

**B**Y what has been premised, I may hope the reader will come the better prepared to an attentive consideration of those texts of Scripture, which I now intend to lay before him; and which may help us to a decision of the great question proposed.

AND first for the words of Moses, Deut. xxx. 19, 20. which may give light to many other texts of a parallel kind. He concludes his charge to the Hraelites with this solemn attestation—*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him, (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days) that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.*

IF we take with us the consideration of what has been before observed, that Moses is here speaking to the people in a general assembly, and as under a twofold covenant; and that he addresses them both in their private and publick capacity, both as a community and as individuals; it will be easy to perceive a mixture of the temporal blessings with the future set before them: life in the land of Canaan, as a nation or an earthly people; and life elsewhere, for such as are of the true Israel of God, with him who is life itself, and the life and length of days of such as are here described, who *love him, and obey his voice, and cleave unto him.*

HE is every where called the Living God in holy Scripture, in opposition to the dead idols of the Heathen: but here he is called the Life of his people. Could they possibly understand it of such a life and no other, as the idol-worshippers enjoyed,

to as great an extent, and with as full prosperity perhaps as they? But it may be said, If another life was here meant, why is it not so expressed? Why is not the word *other* added?

As common as the expression is with us, I do not remember that it is used even in the New Testament; but in the Old, perhaps the genius of the language will not bear it. You can't say another life in Hebrew, but you must say, other lives: for the word for life is plural (חַיִּים *chajim*) intimating, that life is a thing continued or renewed to us every moment; or that the life of every day is a new life given us. So that, in this view it is easy to understand the words of Moses in their fullest and their noblest sense, as if he had said thus—'You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart. For it is He who gave you life at first; It is He that lengthens and renews it to you every morning; It is He who lives for ever, and in whom you live. Cleave to him; therefore, and be sure that he will never leave you. In having Him for your God, you will have life with Him for ever. For He is your life, (or lives) and the length of your days.'

LIFE for evermore, length of days for ever and ever, phrases used by the Psalmist in particular, are equivalent to eternal life in the New Testament.

BUT if another life be a phrase of speech unknown to the Hebrew, it may be still asked, Is there no word in all the bible to express a *future state*? I answer that there is; and that as apt an one as any language in the world, perhaps, can afford; I mean אַחֲרַיִת *acharait*, which is several times used in this sense in holy Scripture.

THUS in the first parable of Balaam, (Num. xxiii.) after foretelling the national prosperity of the Israelites, and their great increase in the land of Canaan, *Lo the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?* (Verse 9, 10.) he presently breaks forth into that ardent wish, which



conveys to us quite another view of the spiritual advantages of the true Israelite : *Let me die the death of the righteous ; and let my acherith (future state) be like his.*

THE word literally denotes an after-time or state : a state that begins again after some remarkable period. Thus the remaining part of Job's life, after his recovery from his afflictions, is called his *acherith*, (Job. xlii. 12.) And as men survive, as it were, in their posterity, this imaginary existence too is called their *acherith*. With the same analogy to the original idea which the word conveys, a reward to be given after the work is done is sometimes called *acherith*. The words *reshith* and *acherith*, the former and the latter part of any duration, are frequently opposed. Thus when the prophet would say, that God foretells from the beginning, and through all past ages, things that shall happen through all ages to come, he does it in three words, *maggid me-reshith acherith*, (Isai. xlv. 10.) And thus the things foretold of the Messiah and his kingdom are represented as to be accomplished *be-acherith ba-jamim*, in the latter part of the days or years of the world. But the word is never used in a more natural or proper sense, than when applied to express *a future state after death* \* : which is evidently the sense wherein it ought to be understood in this parable of Balaam.

AND so likewise, Psalm xxxvii. 37. (whence the wish of Balaam might receive a further illustration, if it needed it) *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; ci acherith le-ish shalom, for the future state of that man is peace, or blessedness.* So the word *shalom* often signifies.

THE Hebrews used the word in their common salutations, just as the Latins did *salus*, when they wished any one prosperity or happiness.

\* If the use of the word in the Arabick be of any consideration, the learned have observed that *achera* in the *Alcoran* is usually put for *alterum seculum*, or the other world.

AGAIN, Psalm lxxiii. 17. is very remarkable to our purpose. The psalmist is considering that great question, why wicked men are permitted to prosper, and good men to be miserable and afflicted here: and to put the case home, he describes these wicked men as profligate to the last degree; highly impious towards God, and injurious to men; and yet suffered to live in ease and affluence, and at last to enjoy the so much wished for *εὐδαιμονία*, a death without any great pain. *There are no bands in their death*, Ver. 4. *Nulli sunt iis angores quando moriuntur*, says Le Clerc himself.

THIS had almost tempted him (he says) to doubt the providence of God. But then he was soon cured of this again, when he reflected on the miracles God had done for his people, which left no room to question a providence. This I take to be the meaning of verse 15. *If I say I will speak thus, (A sapperā, reckon or reason thus) I should offend against the generation of thy children.* That is, I should give the lie to the history of our forefathers.

STILL he was under some perplexity, whilst he looked no further than the visible appearances of things; till he entered the sanctuary of God, then understood he the end of these men, *acberitham*, their *acberith*.

THIS certainly cannot mean their destruction by death; for he had before expressly taken notice of their felicity in this respect. Nor is it easy to say, how the sanctuary, or any thing there, could inform him of the manner of the death of wicked men: this must be learned from observation. Nor can what follows in the next verse, *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castest them down into destruction*, be understood consistently with the rest of the psalm of a temporal destruction, but of their future wretched state in another world, (which is often represented in Scripture by death and destruction.) And so indeed the following verses explain it: *How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!* (that is, the moment that they



they pass from this life to another) *they are utterly consumed with terrors*. It follows, *As a dream when one awaketh, so, O Lord, when thou awakest* (very wrong translation, Heb. *בַּיִר*, *ba-yir*, in *fuscitando*, in rowling or awakening them) *thou wilt despise (or debase) their image*.

THIS, as obscurely as it is expressed, evidently points at something after death. For it is then alone that that the wicked can be thoroughly awakened to see their misery; especially if they die without much pain or anguish, in a stupid thoughtless way, as seems intimated, verse 4, of this psalm.

If the word *tzalm-am*, therefore, *their image*, mean the *εἰδωλον* (as old Homer calls it) the *separated soul*; methinks there is an exquisite propriety in the word *tibzeb*, here used; thou shalt debase, spurn, and render contemptible the ghosts of those haughty wretches, whose pride had raised them in their own conceit above all other men, and even led them to despise their maker and his laws. Their condition in *sheöl*, the region of departed souls, shall be as low and despicable, as here it was in appearance high and happy.

THE Chaldee paraphrast understands the passage of the day of judgment: and Dr. Hammond compares it with that of Dan. xii. 2. *That some shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt*.

BUT that the future wretched state of wicked men is here intended, seems further evident, from its being opposed to the happy state of the righteous at verse 24. *Thou shalt lead me with thy counsel*, (says the psalmist) *and after that receive me into \* glory*. The very term whereby the happiness of heaven is described in the New Testament.

\* The words *cabod tikkacheni*, here, *receive to glory*, may be well explained from Ps. xlix. 16. *God will deliver my soul from the hand of sheöl, *ci jikkachemi*, for he shall receive me—to glory, that is.*

THE

THE following verses are no less remarkable.

*Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee.*

*My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*

COULD any Christian express his hope of being for ever with God in more apt words? It follows, verse 27.

*For they that forsake thee shall perish.*

WHAT can be meant by this, but the *future perdition of wicked men*? For do they perish? That is, are they certainly punished here? Are they so universally? If not, how is it possible to understand these words of any thing temporal? Or how, in short, can this knot be untied, this difficulty solved, which has so often perplexed good men, but by the doctrine of *future rewards and punishments*? This then was that doctrine of the sanctuary which set the psalmist's heart at rest; and that so perfectly and entirely, that he seems to wonder how he could be so weak as to fall into doubts or perplexities about this matter. Verse 21, 22.

*Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins*—disturbed with envy and indignation at the prosperity of the wicked.

*So foolish was I, and ignorant; even as a brute before thee.*

A BRUTE, *bayar* and *bebemah*, (as it is here) or *ish bayar*, a *brutish man*, (Ps. xcii. 7.) is a term very aptly applied in Scripture to one who is wholly taken up with the things that are before him, and has no sense of, or regard to, things future and invisible.

If it be still asked, What was there in the sanctuary to quiet and compose the psalmist's doubts, or to confirm him in the belief of another life?

THE answer is easy; that his entering the sanctuary of God would naturally turn his thoughts towards heaven, the habitation of God and his holy angels, of which the tabernacle and temple were a sort of stand-

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ing



ing symbol and memorial. The figure of the cherubim, which were not only placed in the Holy of Holies, but sculptured on the walls of the temple round about (1 Kings vi. 29) have been generally believed both by Jews and Christians, (except a few moderns perhaps) to represent the hosts of angels \* that attend upon the divine majesty, as his ministers to do his pleasure. And there is so near an affinity betwixt the doctrine of angels, and that of the human souls subsisting after death, that they who believed the one, could scarce be ignorant of, or disbelieve, the other. There is, I think, a promise made to Joshua the high priest, Zechariah iii. 7. that if he discharged his office with fidelity, God would hereafter give him a place in heaven among the blessed angels his attendants. *I will give thee places to walk among them that stand by, ben ha-yomedim ha-ellé, inter ministrantes hos,* among these ministring angels. This seems evidently the meaning.

THE learned Grotius indeed (whose genius is always to be admired, but his judgment to be sometimes questioned) has a different interpretation of these words to this purpose—"I will give thee those that shall walk with thee to protect thee, from amongst these angels that stand by."

THIS exposition, like many others of this great man, strikes and pleases at the first; but upon a nearer view we shall find the Hebrew will not bear it. The words are, *ve-nathatti leca mablecim ben ha-yomedim ha-ellé*: literally, *et dabo tibi ambulacra inter adstantes (vel ministrantes) hosce*: which is well expressed in our translation. This he renders, *et dabo tibi ambulantes de his qui nunc hic assistunt*, 'and I will give thee walkers from amongst those that now stand by here.'

THERE are two errors in this translation. For supposing *ambulantes*, or *walkers*, might be used for

\* See bishop Patrick on 1 Kings vi. 35.

ministring spirits that walk up and down the earth; yet then it should have been, not *mablecim*, but *mitbhallecim* \*. And to make out the force of his preposition *de*, *de his*, *qui assistunt*, &c. it should have been not *ben ba-yomedim*, but *mib-ben ba-yomedim ba ellé*.

THAT *mablac* (of which *mablecim* is the plural) signifies *ambulacrum*, a walking place, or walk; appears plain, from the two following texts, Ezek. xlii. 4. *And before the chambers was a walk (mablac) of ten cubits*, &c. And so Jonah iii. 3. *Nineveh, that great city, is said to be a walk of three days*, *mablac shelo-sheth, jamim*.

I WAS the more solicitous to clear up this text of the prophet Zachariah, because it is one of those illustrious passages that bear testimony to the point we are contending for. Nor will that poor evasion of such as would distinguish betwixt the times before and after the captivity, have any weight with those who have their eyes open to see that the doctrine of angels shews itself throughout the whole Old Testament.

BUT I have been unawares explaining a psalm, where I only meant to fix the meaning of a word. However, it is a word of some importance to us, and therefore I must beg leave to trace it through some other texts; as particularly Prov. xxiii. 17, 18. which is the more remarkable, because the wise man uses it upon the same occasion with the psalmist, and delivers to us exactly the same sentiment: *Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long*; for surely there is an end (in the Hebrew *acherith*, a future state) and thy expectation shall not be cut off.

\* *Mitbhallecim*, *perambulantes*. I think the *Hithpabel* is always used on this occasion; as it is, remarkably to our purpose, in this same prophet, Zach. i. 10. — *These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth*, Heb. *le-hithballec ba-aretz*. And in the same phrase, verse 11: *We have walked to and fro through the earth*, *hithballacnu baaretz*.



THIS is one of the places, where some have rendered *acherith*, a reward. And so *Le Clerc*, *Nam erit etiam merces postero tempore.*

BUT to limit the reward to this world, (as that learned critic every where does) is to make a sort of new world of the present, rather than admit the supposition or belief of another.

THE prophet Jeremiah (Chap. xvii. 11.) compares the man that heaps up riches by injustice, to a bird that sits on eggs without hatching them; and says, that he shall leave his ill-gotten wealth in the midst of his days, and in his *acherith*, or *after-state* shall be a fool—that is, shall have his future portion with the wicked, who are often termed fools in Scripture.

IF we can doubt whether this be the meaning; let us look but a verse or two below, and we shall find, that *all they who forsake God shall be ashamed*, verse 13; and that *they who depart from him*, cannot possibly expect any other happiness than what the present life affords—The phraseology is remarkable, *they shall be written in the earth*, verse 13. that is plainly, they shall not be registered in heaven, nor have their names recorded in the book of life. How should they, when they have forsaken God, *the fountain of living waters*, as it follows, (verse 13.) and who is *the life and length of days* of those that worship and obey him?

AFTER these examples of the meaning of the word *acherith*, we can scarce be at a loss how to understand that ardent wish of Moses in the book of Deut. Chap. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider acherith—am their future state. How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up.*

THIS text is the more remarkable, as it stands in a song which they were to learn by heart, they and their posterity, every Israelite, as containing the strong motives to obedience. And how are we to understand this earnest wish, That, they would consider

sider their *acherith*? That they would consider their own death? This, sure, would be scarce worth the considering, had they no expectations of a *future state*: nor could it serve to whet their courage, but the contrary—Were they to consider then the many glorious things that were promised them as a nation or people, and inhabitants of the land of Canaan, if they kept the laws of God? or the still more glorious things that were laid up for the true Israelites, in some grand future period, and in another state? They must be heroes indeed, (I should have said, perhaps, romantic heroes) if they could be greatly influenced by what was to befall their nation a thousand years after they were dead; and at the same time believe, that they themselves should become nothing, void of all sense or perception. It is true, it has been always held as a mark of a generous mind to be greatly concerned for posterity. But then, what is remarkable, this regard for posterity, of which the noblest natures have the strongest feeling, has, by men of the best sense, been urged as no inconsiderable argument of a *future state of life*. If Moses, therefore, cherished the one principle in the Israelites, we must suppose him to cherish the other likewise. And as the doctrine of a *future state* is naturally apt to inspire courage into those who heartily believe it, and are influenced by it, it may the better help us to understand the connection betwixt the two verses of this song above-cited. *O! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider the certainty of a future state! How should one chase a thousand, &c.*

THERE is another place, where I would feign (methinks) understand the word *acherith* of a *future state*, because it gives a nobler sense to the passage, and sets God's dispensations to the Israelites in a very amiable light: but that I may have room for a fuller discussion of it, I shall pass on to a new section.



## S E C T. V.

THE place I mean is Deut. viii. 16. where Moses, putting the Israelites in mind of the sufferings and hardships they had undergone in their long wanderings through the wilderness, and the miracles of mercy they had there experienced, tells them, it was a course of discipline very proper for them to go through, the better to prepare them for the happiness of the future state.

*Who led thee (says he, verse 15) through that great and terrible wilderness, (the wilderness of this world without an allegory to the vast multitude that died there) wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and drougth, where there was no water? Who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint? Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good be-Acherith-ca, with respect to thy future state?*

THIS must be the meaning, if the generation of men that died in the wilderness, or any of them be included in the merciful intention here declared. And can we think that they were not? If the forbidding them an entrance into the land of Canaan must be supposed to shut them out of heaven; the great law-giver himself was then excluded from it. If it did not, both the distresses they underwent, and the mercies they experienced in their wanderings through the wilderness, must be of admirable use to soften and subdue the heart to a sincere repentance, and submission to the will of God, and all those habits of piety and virtue which were necessary to prepare them for the future state of blessedness.

NAY, God's dispensations to them there seem evidently calculated to inspire them with a more firm belief and hope of such a state.

FOR let us attend to the account which Moses himself has given us of it in the chapter before us.

VER.

VER. 2. *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no.*

HERE then we see the merciful intention of almighty God towards this people: their long wanderings through the wilderness is declared to be a state of tryal or probation for them, whether they would submit to the will of God, and keep his commandments or no. A state of probation doubtless, for that whole people, as well those who were to die there, as those that were to survive, for there is no room for any exception. Nay, it seems rather intended for the former than the latter, as it was a chastisement inflicted on the fathers for their own iniquities; whereas the children are said to be involved in it for the whoredoms or iniquities of their fathers, (Numb. xiv. 33.) It was, in short, a course of discipline (as I said) very proper for them to undergo, in order to wean their hearts from this world, and prepare them for a better. And supposing many, or even the majority might prove refractory; yet there can be no doubt but that a great many good men made a right use of this probationary state.

IT follows, verse 3. *And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna*—Angels food, the bread of heaven, says the psalmist, Psalm lxxviii. 24, 25. As if, like the fabulous ambrosia of the Heathen, it were intended to convey to them immortality. And can we suppose them to be thus miraculously fed, and all the while destitute of the chief comforts of religion? No hope or belief of a life to come?

SOME of the Jewish rabbins (from whom we have now and then a sublime thought, to make amends for their low and childish ones) tells us, that as the blessed in the future state (children of the age to come, as they call them) (shall be fed or sustained by



the light and splendor of the divine majesty, so this manna was no other than the divine light incorporated\*.

THAT it was no very solid or substantial food, we learn from the complaints of the grosser Israelites, who spoke of it with contempt. *There is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes*, Numb. xi. vi. And again, *Our soul loatheth this light food*, Numb. xxi. 5.

BUT the lighter it was, the better, probably it would fit them for contemplation: And so answer one chief end for which we may suppose it given to those whose hopes were terminated as to this world; and who therefore could not possibly be easy, nor perhaps governable, under these circumstances, had not their minds been raised, and turned towards those celestial regions from whence this manna came.

BUT whatever might be the natural effect of this food; that it had a typical reference we are sure, from the words of him who was the true divine light incorporate, and who calls himself *that bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*, John vi. 33. *He that cometh to me* (as he goes on to explain himself) *shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life*, John vi. 35, 47, 48.

AND that the Israelites were not unacquainted with this typical reference, appears plain (I think) from what may be called in this case the best human authority, as well as divine; I mean the testimony of St. Paul, who says of their fathers (that is, the Israelites in the wilderness) *that they did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ*. 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

HERE then the manna, (for this, no doubt, is meant) is said to be to the Israelites a *spiritual meat*. But how was it possible it should be so, unless they were taught the spiritual meaning of it?

\* See Buxtorff. *Exercit. ad historiam Mannæ*, p. 352.

THAT it had some reference to another life, seems indeed not obscurely hinted by the great lawgiver himself, in this passage of Deuteronomy we are considering. *He fed thee with manna* (says he) *which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee to know, that man doth not live by bread only, but by every (word) that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.* Deut viii. 3.

As if he had said, 'You see from this plain instance, that life depends upon the will of God; who, as he gave it at the first, so he can preserve, restore, perpetuate it at his pleasure. His word alone gives life: believe it, and obey it therefore; lead a life of faith, and you will live for ever\*. Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.' *The words that I speak unto you* (says our Saviour in the same divine phraseology) *they are spirit, and they are life,* John vi. 63.

IT follows, *Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell these forty years,* Deut. viii. 4. Here was another instructive circumstance: for there could scarce be a plainer demonstration of the power of God to continue man in being, in a life interminable and unchangeable.

YET farther, verse 5. *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.* A direct confutation of that idle notion of Maimonides, wherein he acknowledges he goes contrary to the opinion of their own wise men †

viz.

\* The common interpretation of this passage appears to me, I own, extremely flat. It is to this purpose: He fed thee with manna, that he might make thee to know, that he can command any thing else to sustain thee beside the common food: that is, he fed thee by a miracle to make thee know—that he can feed thee by a miracle.

† *Unum tamen occurrit in verbis sapientum nostrorum, quod non invenitur in lege; id nempe, quod quidam eorum dicunt* יסודין של אהבה *b. e. castigationes amoris.* More Nev. p. 3. C. 17. p. 381. One would think this learned man had never read that plain sentence, Prov.



*viz.* that there is no such thing as *castigationes amoris* to be found in the law. For if the chastisements of a father be not chastisements of love, it will be difficult to form an idea of any such thing.

BUT how shall we reconcile with this idea of paternal love, the condemnation of a whole people (two persons only excepted) from twenty years old and upward, (if all guilty, yet in very unequal measures and degrees) to a life of wanderings, and of hardships, and inevitable death without any hope or prospect of a future state.

If all this will not convince us of the true design of God in leading this vast multitude through the wilderness for near forty years together, like condemned criminals reprieved in mercy to their souls: (for God could have destroyed them in a moment, if he pleased \*; or let them starve by famine, and needed not to have been at the expence of miracles to support them) I say, if all this will not convince us what is meant by doing them good, *be-acherit-bam*, in their after-state: there is a psalm or two of Moses their great leader, (for I take both the ninetieth and ninety-first to be his) made on purpose for their instruction and consolation in the wilderness, that will afford us still further light into this matter.

THE ninetieth psalm is expressly attributed to Moses in the title. And the titles of the psalms, though

Prov. iii. 11, 12. *My son despise not thou the chastening of the Lord—For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son, in whom he delighteth.*

\* The author of the *Book of Wisdom* observes, that God was pleased to deal mercifully even with the Canaanites, whom he had devoted to destruction; and to extirpate them in a slow and leisurely way, that he might give them opportunity for repenting. Chap. xii. 8, 9, 10. *Nevertheless, even those thou sparedst as men, and didst send wasps forerunners of thine host, to destroy them by little and little. Not that thou wast unable to bring the ungodly under the hand of the righteous in battle, or to destroy them at once with cruel beasts, or with one rough sword: But executing thy judgments upon them by little and little, thou gavest them place of repentance, not being ignorant that they were a naughty generation.* There is something very amiable in this representation, as well as favourable to our present argument.

not of the same authority with the text, are confessedly very ancient, and for the most part very just.

THE following psalm carries no title, and is therefore likely to be by the same hand with the foregoing. But this is still more probable from the subject of it: for as the ninetieth psalm appears calculated for the use of those who were to die in the wilderness; so the ninety-first seems evidently designed for those who were to survive this threatened devastation; and whom therefore he arms against the fear of death by a religious trust in God, with the promise of a miraculous protection to such as trusted in him.

BOTH psalms seem to have been composed soon after the irrevocable decree was passed, (Num. xiv.) which condemned the one part of them, viz. all that were numbered from twenty years old and upward, (Numb. xiv. 29.) to a lingering death in the wilderness; and their little ones to a forty years wandering for their fathers sins, but with a gracious promise however, that they should at length obtain an entrance into the land of Canaan. Both sorts therefore stood in need of a support and consolation, though of a different kind; and we find it given them in these two psalms.

THE younger sort are thus instructed and encouraged, Psalm. xci.

VER. 1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

2. *I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge, and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust.*

3. *Surely, he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.*

4. *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou confide: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

*His truth*—meaning, no doubt, that gracious promise, Num. xiv. 31. *But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.* Whereas of the others their doom



doom is repeated in the following verse, *Your carcases shall fall in the wilderness.*

THE younger ones then were to rest secure in the divine promise for protection, amidst the daily spectacles of mortality, to which they were to be soon accustomed.

FOR thus it follows, verse 5.

*Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.*

6. *For the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day.*

7. *A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.*

8. *Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.*

THAT is, Thou shalt only have the discomfort of seeing those who may be dear to thee fall by their own guilt, and the just sentence passed upon them for their wicked murmurings and disobedience.

WHAT follows points out still more plainly the occasion of this psalm. For as they were not only exposed to diseases in the wilderness, but the incursions of wild beasts, and particularly the venomous bite of serpents; he tells them that God would protect them from all these dangers, by giving his angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways. And verse 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot.*

THERE is something so particular in this, that it will suit no other part of their history, beside that to which we suppose it to refer.

FOR the wilderness they were condemned to wander in, abounded with these noxious creatures; as we learn from the words of Moses, Deut. viii. 15. *Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, &c.*

AND yet we do not read that the Israelites were infested by them, till towards the end of forty years wandrings, when God was pleased, for the renewed murmurings of that people, to let them loose upon them

them to chastise them. And even then immediately upon their humiliation, a miraculous remedy was provided, which deserves our notice.

It was a serpent of brass, by the express order of God, fixed upon a pole or standard, (Heb. *gal nes*) *And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived.* We have the whole account of this matter, Num. xxi. from Verse 5. to the 9th.

The Jewish rabbins say, that here was a miracle in a miracle; the looking at the figure of a serpent being naturally more apt to inflame than heal, the bite of that venomous creature.

BUT they seem to have forgotten, that the serpent here was dead. And a dead serpent erected as a trophy, on a pole, was a fit spectacle to call to their remembrance that which seems to have been the great object of their faith and hope from the fall: I mean the promised victory over the old serpent through that seed of the woman who was destined to bruise his head.

AND this implying a victory over death, the sight of this brazen serpent must fill them with delight and confidence, and not with dread.

THE author of the book of Wisdom calls it a *sign* (or symbol) of *salvation*; but adds, *to put them in remembrance of the commandment of the law*, (Wisd. xvi. 6.) rather of him, who was the end and aim of the law, the promised redeemer. And if a belief in that great person was made a condition of their obtaining a cure of the bite of those venomous creatures; we see here an admirable use of this symbol of salvation, (as the above-named author rightly terms it) and how solicitous, if I may so speak, the divine wisdom seems to have been to preserve upon the minds of the faithful the first hopes which he had given them of a redemption from that death which was the consequence of the fall.

THE gloss of the Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan therefore seems here to have something considerable in it to our purpose. 'It came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent  
' of



• of brass he lived, *Siquidem direxerit cor suum ad verbum Domini*, if so be he directed his heart to the word of God—meaning probably, that great person promised from the beginning by the word of God.

IF we consider how careful Moses was to preserve his people from idolatry, and every thing that had a tendency towards it, it is scarce to be doubted but that when he set up this object of their wonder and attention, he explained to them its mysterious meaning, so far at least as was necessary to guard against any idolatrous abuse of the thing. And whoever has a notion of the true end for which the ritual law in all its parts appears to have been contrived, will make no difficulty to conclude, that the erecting of this brazen serpent had the same great end in view, and carried with it some notice of that person, in whom they were to expect salvation in the highest sense.

NAY, had it not been for this symbolical and typical, or standing use of it, it is highly probable that Moses would have taken it down again, as soon as the present miraculous purpose for which it was erected was obtained. But we find it remaining even to Hezekiah's time; and such an high veneration paid to it, as degenerated at length into a superstitious worship, which made that pious king take it down and demolish it, as we read 2 Kings xviii. 4.

WHETHER he did this at the instance of the prophet Isaiah, is not told us. But it is remarkable that, about this time, to prepare them (probably) for the removal of this stumbling block, as well as to recall them to the proper object of their faith, this evangelical prophet (as he is called by way of eminence) gives them a fresh promise of their great deliverer, who in this symbol erected by Moses, was represented, not by the serpent, but by the *nes*, the pole or standard, upon which it was hung. For it is with allusion to this (I suppose) that the prophet describes our Saviour as *a root (or plant) of Jesse, that should*

should stand, le-nes yammim, for a Nes or standard of the people, (Heb. peoples, plur.) to him should the Gentiles seek \*. And I think we cannot have a better comment either upon this prophecy, or the Mosaic symbol to which I suppose it to refer, than the words of our blessed Lord himself, John iii. 14. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up.* And again, John xii. 32. *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me :* This he said (adds the Evangelist) signifying what death he should die. For it was through death that the Captain of our salvation was to destroy (or defeat) him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil, Heb. ii. 14.— *that great dragon, or old serpent* (as he is called, Rev. xii. 9.) who by the success of his temptations first brought death into the world.

I HAVE thrown these texts together, that we might here observe the harmony of Scripture; and how naturally the words of our blessed Lord and his apostles point us through the prophecy of Isaiah and the brazen serpent of Moses, back to the first notice of a Redeemer given to mankind after the fall, in that well known sentence, Gen. iii. 15. or the first link of that chain of prophecy which runs throughout the Old Testament, and has its completion in the New.

I SHALL not lay any stress upon that assertion of Justin Martyr †, that the Nes or standard, upon which this brazen serpent hung, bore the figure of a cross; for I suppose it only a conjecture. It is sufficient to our purpose, if this serpent, thus erected as a trophy, was considered by them as an emblem of the victory to be obtained over the old serpent by the promised seed; whether they had any explicate knowledge of the means whereby this victory was to be obtained

\* Isai. xi. 10. *To him shall the gathering of the people be,* says old Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10.

† Just. Mart. Apol. 2. *pro Christianis.* See Buxtorff's *Exercitationes ad Histor. Serpentis anei*, p. 491, 492.



or not. For in this view it presented to the minds of the faithful the hopes of a deliverance from death in a higher sense than a present cure of the bite of these venomous creatures imported. And it is no improbable supposition, that a belief of the one, (as I before observed) was made the condition of the other.

So that what our Saviour says to some of those upon whom he had wrought his miraculous cures, *Thy faith hath saved thee; or thy faith hath made thee whole*, may not unfitly be applied to the present case.

WHETHER they who looked at the brazen serpent were directed at the same time to repeat the Psalm before us, I know not; but this I am sure of, that it affords a meditation highly suitable to the occasion. A religious trust in God is what we see inculcated throughout. And that remarkable sentence, verse 13. *Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot*, (especially if as the learned Bochart thinks, these are only names of serpents of different sorts) is only saying in other words, *Thou shalt bruise the serpent's head*. And if an act of faith in that great person who was to do this for them, be here supposed and implied, then it will be easy and natural to interpret the following verses of this Psalm in a sense of faith likewise, and as pointing out to them, in no obscure terms (I might say perhaps in very magnificent terms) the Gospel life and salvation.

VERSE 14, 15, 16. *Because he hath set his love upon me, (saith God) therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high because he hath known my name.*

*He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him, va-acabbedehu, and glorify him.*

*With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.*

If we can doubt what is here meant by *long life*, we may find it well explained to us, Ps. xxi. 4. *He asked life*

*life of thee, and thou givest him a long life even for ever and ever.*

As for the term *salvation*, let us hear Le Clerc's comment upon the place. 'If you interpret this (says he) 'in the Christian way, it will be *eternal salvation*.' But then he adds, 'But it should first be shewn, that 'this *salvation* was clearly revealed, before it be looked for in an ambiguous place, or text.' \*

If we can shew then, that this *salvation* was revealed from the beginning; or that God's faithful people, all along from the fall, expected some great person through whom they should at length obtain a conquest over death, (and some proof of it, I think, appears from what has been briefly offer'd in this section) then the words *life* and *salvation* in the Old Testament will be no longer ambiguous; or at least may very naturally be understood of a *future life* and *salvation*, when the context favours such an interpretation. In short, every prophecy of our Saviour, that was understood by the Israelites, (and it is strange if they should not understand some of them, else where was their high privilege in having *the oracles of God* committed to them, Rom. iii. 2.) was to them an intimation of another life. As on the other hand, the express notices of another life to be met with in the Old Testament, are a confirmation of the prophecies; so that they lend a mutual assistance to each other. And therefore I have not gone beside my subject, by having had an eye to both in the explication I have given of this Psalm. Upon which I have dwelt the longer, being willing to assert to its proper author this noble remain of the Jewish lawgiver and historian, in itself so excellent and so worthy of him; and the subject so exactly suiting the time and occasion I have mentioned, and no other.

I SHALL be more brief in considering the other Psalm, which carries the name of its author in the title, and was composed upon the same occasion, but chiefly for the use of those whose lot was to die in the

\* *Salutem meam videat*] Si Christiano more hac interpreteris, erit *salus aeterna*; sed prius ostendendum esset, perspicue eam revelatam fuisse, antequam in loco ambiguo quaereretur. Le Clerc in Psalm xci. 16.



wilderness, as may be gathered from the subject of it. And let us observe how this divinely inspired teacher both instructs and comforts them.

HE first puts them in mind of the eternity of God, the never-failing refuge of his faithful servants in all ages; and this in a very noble strain of poetry.

PSALM XC. 1. *Lord, thou hast been our refuge from generation to generation.*

2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made; even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.*

IT follows, verse 3. *Thou wilt turn man* (Heb. make him return) *to the small dust; and thou wilt say, return ye sons of men.* This is literally the translation, and the sense seems plain and clear. Though mortal man (*enesh*) must, at thy command, return to the earth out of which he was formed, nay, *yad dacca*, even to powder; yet at thy command he shall again revive, *wat-tomar shubu bené Adam*, and thou wilt say, *return ye sons of Adam.*

THIS sense is further confirmed by what follows, *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, ci jayabor, for it will pass; or (as) a watch in the night,* a still shorter space of time. Plainly intimating, that though the future resurrection might be at a thousand or ten thousand years distance; yet this was nothing compared with the eternity of God\*.

AND agreeably to this the following verse considers death as a sort of sleep, from whence they should awake in the morning fresh and flourishing as an herb. And I think we have this image of a resurrection exhibited to us more than once in the prophets. Ver. 5. *Thou sweepest them away as with a flood; they shall be (as) a sleep. In the morning (they shall be) as the herb (that) renews itself,* חֲדָשׁוֹת כְּחֶרֶב. In this sense the verb *chalaph* is used here; and so in the following verse, where there is a turn of thought and expression very remarkable and poetical.

\* So St. Peter, using the like phrase, and upon a like occasion tells us, that *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,* 2 Pet. iii. 8.

For the sacred writer, from giving them this glimpse of their *future resurrection and renovation*, returns to take a view of their present dying and distressed condition; and this in the same metaphor, and with a repetition that is very beautiful. A repetition, I mean, of the delightful part of the contemplation, (for we love to dwell upon what is pleasing to us) but followed with a reflection sad and gloomy. Yes, (says he) *In the morning it flourishes and renews itself; at even it is cut down and dried up,* verse 6.

AND this last, (as he goes on) is a just image of our present case. The evening of our life comes on apace: *For we consume away in thine anger, and are terrified at thy wrath. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*

*For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.*

*The days of our years are threescore years and ten, &c.* verse 7, 8, 9, 10.

IF this may be thought too short a term for the general standard of human life in those early ages, (as some would infer from hence, that Moses could not be the author of this Psalm) yet it suits well with the particular case of the Israelites in the wilderness, whose life was shortened by an express decree, so that a great number of them could not possibly reach the age of seventy; and those that did, probably, soon felt a swift decay.

It follows, verse 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? Even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.* That is, in proportion to the fear and reverence which is due to thee as the great Lord and Sovereign of the world, so may the transgressors of thy laws expect their punishment. Something seems here intimated beyond the punishments of this world; for these are what men feel and experience. But who knows the dreadful punishments of a *future state*?



WELL therefore is this reflection followed by that devout prayer, verse 12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom\**: meaning no doubt, that wisdom which alone is such in the sense of holy Scripture, the fear of God, and keeping his commandments. That so by making a right use of this short uncertain space of time allotted to us here, we may prepare ourselves the better for a future state.

I SHALL go no further with this Psalm, though it were easy to shew the following verses to the end to be equally suitable to the condition of the persons for whom it was intended. I think it appears from what has been said, that the Israelites in the wilderness, when cut off from all hopes of an earthly Canaan, and the promises of this life, were not left destitute of better hopes, or without the knowledge of a Redeemer and a life to come. And that God's leading them through *this great and terrible wilderness, to humble them and to prove them, that he might do them good*, (as he says himself) *be-acherith-am*, in their *Acherith*— must be understood according to the most natural sense of the word, in *their future state*.

\* Le Clerc thus renders and comments upon the words, *Ad numerandam dies nostros sic fac, ut innotescat, et adducamus cor ad sapientiam; hoc est, fac ut reputemus quam brevis ævi finis, qua re fiat, ut magis sapiamus. Qui hoc reputant, ut decet, omnem Superbiam Animo ejiciunt, Virtutemque sectantur, ut breve illud Ævum tranquillius graduantur. Quæ tamen sunt hominis alteram, post banc, Vitam ignorantis— &c. They (says he) who consider this as they ought, (viz. the shortness of human life) banish all pride from their hearts, and follow virtue, that they may pass this short space of time with the more tranquillity. Which nevertheless (he adds) is the part of a man that knows no other life but this, &c.*

Such a man, I grant, may banish pride from his heart, for he must needs regard himself as a very low creature, according to his own principles; but then he will fall into the other extreme, probably, of a base, ungenerous, or pusillanimous spirit. He may likewise be able, for ought I know, to sleep away his time with great tranquillity. But *virtutem sectari*, to be a follower of virtue! It is impossible— *Sectari Epicurum*, would have suited the place much better.

IF we can yet have any doubt about the author and occasion of these Psalms; there is a text of Nehemiah, which, though I have not seen taken notice of by the commentators in this light, seems to me greatly to confirm what has been offered upon this head. The text I mean is Chap. ix. ver. 20.

THE chapter contains a solemn confession pronounced by the Levites for the people, on a day of fasting and humiliation, of God's great goodness to them on the one hand, and their own backslidings and perverseness on the other. It is, indeed, a beautiful epitome of the history of that people, raised and animated by a spirit of devotion, which appears in all that moving \* eloquence which was suited to the great occasion; and, at the same time, with all that chasteness and correctness of thought and expression, which so eminently distinguishes the sacred writings of this sort from the wild raptures of enthusiasm.

BUT to come to our purpose: in recapitulating the miracles of Divine goodness that were vouchsafed their fathers in the wilderness, such as the pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night to conduct them; the manna; and the water from the rock: the sacred writer adds this, as none of the least memorable of God's mercies to them there: *Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them.*

SOMETHING, surely, must be meant by this; and of what can we more naturally understand it, than of the good Spirit by the hand of Moses, (to use a Hebrew phrase) or the Spirit that inspired him to compose these Psalms for their instruction? One of them (as I have observed) carries the title of, *A Psalm or Prayer of Moses*: and those titles were not given at random; nor would any one, in the ancient Jewish church, dare to ascribe a Psalm to Moses, that was not by a long and uncontested Tradition proved to

\* *Oratio hæc Nehemia egregia est & imitanda, &c.* says the excellent Grotius, whose judgment in things of this kind is unquestionable.



belong to him. Probably this very passage, which I suppose to refer to it, may be much older than the time of Nehemiah: for as the confessions of this sort were a usual part of their divine worship, at least in times of solemn humiliation; it is probable the greatest part of this confession before us might have been delivered down to them from ancient times, and only enlarged with proper additions upon this occasion: and if so, the clause, (ver. 20.) *Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them*, may be, for any thing that we know, near as old as Moses himself, and can refer to nothing so likely as to these Psalms.

THERE is something, indeed, in the prophet Amos, (Chap. v.) that may seem to clash with the account here given; and has made some to think, that the Israelites, in their forty years wanderings through the wilderness, continued in a course of rebellion against God, nay, and in the practice of idolatry. But as this is a thing highly improbable in itself, whether we respect Moses their leader, or God their Supreme Governor, and the miraculous providences whereby they were there all along fed and sustained: so neither do the words of the prophet (I think) carry with them any such import.

THE words are these—

AMOS v. 25. *Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?*

26. *But ye have. born the tabernacle of Moloch and Chiun your images; the star of your God which ye made for yourselves.*

27. *Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts.*

It has been thought that the idolatry here mentioned was practised by the Israelites in the wilderness. But there is nothing in the text to fix it down to that time; and it is much more likely to have been the sin of the Israelites that lived in Amos's days; for which, in the last verse, he threatens them with

with that captivity which afterwards befell the ten Tribes: for why should he denounce this punishment upon them for the sin of their ancestors at such a distance, (a sin too, of which there is not the least mention in the history) and not rather for their own sins?

ALL that is here mentioned, relating to the Israelites in the wilderness, is the omission of sacrifices. Nor is this mentioned by way of reproach: For how should he reproach them for the omission of a thing, which perhaps, was not in their power to perform? Had the Israelites in the wilderness had plenty of sheep and bullocks and corn, so as to offer the accustomed sacrifices, there had been no need to have fed them all that time by miracle. But if they had none, they could offer none; nor did God require it of them. The scarcity at least of seems provisions of that sort, during that long interval, to have created a suspension both of the laws relating to sacrifices and to the passover, after the passover of the second year celebrated, Num. ix. In short, the design for which the prophet mentions this particular here, was evidently (as appears from the context) to let the people of his own time see how little God valued their sacrifices in reality, as to the mere worth of the thing; and how much he despised them, when offered to him by wicked hands, and with a vain persuasion that they would be accepted instead of those other more substantial duties they were bound to practice.

THUS, VER. 21—24. *I hate, I despise your feast-days— though ye offer me burnt-offerings and meat-offerings, I will not accept them— Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs, (those hymns of praise which always accompanied their sacrifices) for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. These things are much more acceptable to me, than the richest sacrifice that you can bring: for you know that I exacted no such thing from your forefathers, while they journeyed through the wilderness, for near forty*



years. Verse 25. *Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness, forty years, O house of Israel?\** Why then should you think that I would accept them now, instead of that justice and judgment which you ought rather to have practised.

BUT to make your sacrifices still more unacceptable to me, (as it goes on) you have added your idolatrous practices to my worship. You have carried about in procession the tabernacles of *Moloch* and *Chiun* your images, the star of your God which ye made to yourselves. *Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is the God of hosts,* ver. 26, 27. That is, as you have carried about your idols in great pomp; so shall you yourselves be carried in triumph to a distant country, saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the Creator and absolute Disposer of all the hosts of heaven, both visible and invisible, which you, in opposition to his declared will, so foolishly and presumptuously worship.

THIS, I believe, will appear upon an attentive consideration to be the true intention of this passage of the prophet Amos. And I might here conclude this section, for it has been drawn out to a sufficient length.

BUT as it may be thought by some, that in explaining Psalm xc. which I suppose designed for the use of those who were condemned to die in the wilderness, I have drawn a consolation for them from some parts of it, which Moses never intended them: I shall produce a passage from the body of his laws, (where every word, we may presume, is weighty and significant) from whence it will appear in what

\* Perhaps the words of Jeremiah, (Ch. vii. 22, 23.) may receive some light from hence: *For I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; (that is, I exacted no such thing from them for near forty years, during their wanderings in the wilderness). But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice; and I will be your God, and you shall be my people.* A phrase that has been already more than once explained.

light this great lawgiver would have his people look at death; and what a superiority over all its terrors, their relation to God, and the principles of their faith or religion, were fitted to inspire them with.

He gives them then, (Deut. xiv.) a remarkable precept for their behaviour upon occasion of the death of others, their near relations or friends. The purport whereof is this; That they should carefully avoid the follies and extravagancies used by the Heathen at their funerals, and mourn with decency and sobriety, as became the People of God—— I was going to add, *not like others who have no hope*, 1 Thess. iv. 13. But let us consider the words themselves, and endeavour to find out their full import.

DEUT. XIV. 1, 2. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.*

*For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*

THE making a baldness between the eyes, seems to mean cutting off the forelock, the chief honours of the head, and throwing it on the dead body, perhaps, as we find the custom described by Homer\*, at the funeral of Patroclus.

IN general then, the Israelites are here forbidden those expressions of sorrow at their funerals, which were so common with other nations. And that we may not think the sole reason of forbidding them was, because the Gentiles used them, and so there might be something superstitious in these practices themselves; it is observable, that the law of them was indulged them upon other occasions; nay, is required by the prophet Jeremiah, Ch. vii. 29. *Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the Lord hath re-*

\* *Ἐπεὶ δὲ πάντα νεκρὸν κατακύνει, αἷς ἐνὶ κάλλος*  
Κυρῶμενος — Hom. II. 23. 135.



*jected and forsaken the generation of his wrath:* That is, the Jews of that generation who had so highly provoked him.

JERUSALEM then, as a mourner, is here commanded to cut off her hair, and cast it from her, because God had rejected and forsaken that wicked generation. May we not from hence infer, that the reason why Moses forbids the like expressions of sorrow for the dead, was because God had not rejected and forsaken them? They were still his people, if they died in the observance of his covenant, and were entitled to a future happy resurrection.

BUT to strengthen this conjecture, let us consider the high privileges here mentioned as belonging to them, and which are urged as so many reasons, that ought to mitigate their sorrows for the dead.

VER. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God. Banim attem l-Jehovah—ye are sons to Jehovah.* A higher title, I think, is not any where bestowed upon the angels of God.

It follows, Ver. 2. *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God—An holy people, yam kadosh—* Here again is a title common with the blessed angels, who are called *Kedoshim* in Scripture, and heaven the habitation of God's holiness, as he was there attended with those *Kedoshim*, or holy ones.

YET further—*And the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.* A peculiar people, *yam Segullab—* That is, a people whom he would esteem and cherish as a treasure: for thus the word signifies, something highly valuable, which is laid up and preserved with the utmost care. But the full import of it, as it respects the truly good, (who are alone his people in the strictest sense) will best be seen from a passage of the prophet Malachi, (Chap. iii. 16.) where a *book of remembrance* is said to be written before God, for them, who in a time of great degeneracy, when irreligion and wickedness had overspread the land, yet still feared the Lord, and thought upon

upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels (אֲבִיבִי, my Segullab or treasure) and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, Mal. iii. 16, 17, 18.

THIS last Verse, we see, fixes the time to the resurrection and the general judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and where alone it will be possible for us to discern who are righteous and who are wicked, by the divine distributions towards them; when every man shall receive his final lot, either of reward or punishment: and then shall we know with certainty, both who are God's Segullab, and what it is to be so.

As lightly as the learned have been used to pass over these expressions in the Old Testament; we find them borrowed by our Lord's apostles (who knew the value of them) in the New Testament, to set forth the high privileges of Christianity. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*, says the apostle St. John to Christians, 1 John iii. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*, says Moses here to the Israelites. *The sons of mortal men are mortal; the sons of God are like their Father, partakers of the divine nature, and are immortal*, says our judicious Mr. Lock on Rom. viii. 14.

St. Paul lays the greatest stress upon this *Υιοθεσία*, *sonship* or *adoption*, Rom. viii. 23. and calls it *the redemption of the body*, as it imports a title to the future happy resurrection: and, what is still more remarkable to our purpose, in the following chapter he expressly tells us, that this *Υιοθεσία* belonged to the Israelites, as much as *the glory* (or divine *Shecinah*,) *the covenants*\*, *the giving of the law*, *the promi-*

\* *The covenants*, αἱ διαθήκαι, remarkably, in the plural; not only the mount Sinai, but the Abrahamic covenant, so often and so clearly distinguished by this great apostle.



ses, and all the other privileges of their religion, Rom. ix. 4.

THE same apostle, in his addresses to the church of Rome, of Corinth and others, to put them in mind of that exalted happiness which was the object of their Christian hope, gives them, (by way of anticipation as it were) the high title of Saints, or *Kadoshim*. And what is this but the *yam kadosh*, the title so often given the Israelites by Moses?

NAY, he tells us, that the very end for which our Saviour gave himself for us was, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, (*λαόν περιώνυσιν*, Moses's, *yam Segullab* turned into Greek) *zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14.

IN the New Testament all these exalted appellations have a plain reference to another life. In the Old Testament we are made to believe they had no meaning at all, or none that the people could comprehend, or but a poor and beggarly one—the literal milk and honey of the land of Canaan, with which they were to be fed like babes, (shall I say) or like creatures of a lower rank. For it seems these *Banim l-Jehovah*, Sons of God, though they bore the name of angels, were to believe that they should die like brutes. The *yam kadosh*, or holy people, were to have their holiness for their pains. And God's *Segullab* or treasure, instead of being laid up for some glorious day, were to become an everlasting heap of dust.

BUT the ancient Jews or Hebrews (surely) understood their own language better: and the writings of this great apostle, who was so compleat a master of the Hebrew learning, as they cast the strongest light upon the books of the Old Testament, so they derive a reciprocal light from them.

BUT let us now proceed to some other, and yet fuller proofs of the great point before us.

## S E C T. VI.

**T**HE Universe was divided by the ancient Hebrews into the upper and the lower, the visible and invisible hemisphere. The one they called *Em, Shamaim*, or heaven; the other *Sheol*, which we have no English word to express.

THESE two are opposed to each other, in Scripture, for height and depth. Thus Job xi. 8. *It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol, what canst thou know?* And so the Psalmist, speaking of God's omnipresence, (Ps. cxxxix. 8. *If I ascend up to heaven, thou art there; and if I go down to Sheol, thou art there also.*

AGAIN, Heaven was consider'd by them as the habitation of God and his holy angels; *Sheol* as the region of departed souls; and the surface of the earth, lying in the middle betwixt both, as the habitation of the sons of men during their short continuance here in this life.

As little philosophical as this may seem, the division is simple and natural; and we are not concerned with it in a philosophical, but a theological view; as it shews the belief of the ancients under the Old Testament, that the soul subsists after death in a certain place and state.

THEY who deny this to have been their belief, must of course deny that *Sheol*, with them, had any such meaning as is above intimated; and therefore let us try to ascertain the sense of it. I can think but of three ways to come at the meaning of a word in any dead language. One is, by recurring to the etymology of it— Another, by considering the sense and scope of the several places where the word occurs— And a third, by consulting the translations of it into other languages.

LET us begin then with the etymology of the word, which in all languages is of some weight, but in the Hebrew of the greatest.

FROM



FROM שאל *Shaal*, to ask or seek, comes שאל *Sbeól*, (with a *Vau* inserted as the third letter to give it a passive signification,) a thing or place *sought*, or the place whereto all tend.

AND that this is meant not of a place to which all things tend to their centre, but precisely of the place where men, or the souls of men go at their death, is very evident from the use of the word throughout the Scriptures; for it is never said that stones or brutes go to *Sbeól*, or any thing else in a proper sense, but men or the souls of men only. The trees of Lebanon indeed are said, by a bold figure, (Ezec. xxxi. 17.) to go down to *Sbeól*, together with that tall cedar the king of Assyria; but then these trees are men.

THERE is another remarkable sense of the verb *Shaal*, wherein it is sometimes used, viz. for *petere vel accipere commodato*, to borrow or lend. So 2 Kings vi. 5. *Alas, master, for it was שאל, borrowed.* According to this acceptation, *Sbeól* will signify a place borrowed or lent; which does not unfitly express the intermediate state betwixt death and a resurrection.

AND thus it will fall in with the Egyptian word *Amenthes*; which, according to Plutarch, meant the same with the *Hades* of the Greeks, the place to which they believed their souls to go after death; σημαίνοντος τῷ ὀνόματι τὸν λαμβάνοντα καὶ δίδοντα, *the name (says he) signifying one that receives and gives*\*: That is, receives in order to give up again. For this seems to be the simple and original meaning, however Sir J. Marsham has put another construction upon it by inverting the order of the words †.

\* Καὶ ὡς Ἴδουσις ἄλλα τι πολλὰ τῷ ὀνόματι λέγει ἡμεῖς, καὶ τὰ ὑποχθίνου τόπου, εἰς ᾧ οἰοῦνται τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνιέρχουσαι μετὰ τὴν τελευτήν, Αμένθην καλοῦσι. σημαίνοντος τοῦ ὀνόματος τὸν λαμβάνοντα καὶ δίδοντα. As the Egyptians in many instances have reasons for the names they give to things; so they call the subterraneous place whither souls go away after death, *Amenthes*; the name signifying one that receives and gives. *Plut. de Iside*, p. 362. Edit. Francofurti, 1610. Fol.

† His words are, *illi (Ægyptii) animas neque genitas neque interituras; sed Amenthen eas nascentibus præbere, a morientibus recipere,*

If we proceed, in the next place, to consider the use of the word *Sheôl*, where it occurs in Scripture, we shall find it exactly answering to the etymology that has been given of it, viz. That it is used for the place where the souls of men go at their death, and the souls of all without exception.

THUS the Psalmist says, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheôl*, (Ps. xvi. 10.) And again, *What man is there that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand (or power) of Sheôl?* jemallet naphsh-o mi-jad Sheôl, (Ps. lxxxix. 48.)

THE pretence that *Sheôl*, in either of these places, may signify the grave, and *nepheš* only the dead body, is a mere evasion, or proceeds from an inattention to the very nature of language.

IT is true that *תמא נפש* *temé nepheš*, defiled with a soul, (Hag. ii. 13. and perhaps elsewhere) may mean the same as defiled with a dead body. But then the expression is elliptical, taken from the law itself, and abridged in common speech, as it often happens.

THE words of the law, as we have them, Num. xix. 11. are these, *ha-nogea; be-meth le-col nepheš adam, ve-tame shibyath jamin. He that toucheth the dead of (or belonging to) any soul of man shall be unclean seven days.*

Now when they spoke of one defiled in this way, (if instead of saying, *temé be-meth le-nepheš adam, defiled with the dead of any soul of man*) they used to contract the phrase, and say only, *temé nepheš, defiled with a*

*re, e-istimabant.* (Can. Chron. p. 269. in Voce Adm.) But Plutarch does not say that *Amenthes* signified *præbentem & recipientem*, or τὰ διδόντα & λαμβάνοντα, but λαμβάνοντα first, and then διδόντα, *accipientem & dantem*, as he himself translates it.

It must be owned however, that the notion itself was very ancient among the Greeks at least. For Plato in his *Phædo*, (Sect. 114.) mentions it as *an old opinion*, (παλαιὰ καὶ οὖν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρχαία γνώμη, &c.) "That the souls of men go from hence to *Hades*, and again return hither; and so the living are made out of the dead, and the dead of the living." But this notion, as well as the metempsychosis, seems to have been the offspring of philosophy and speculation; which, by refining upon the primitive traditional doctrines, generally depraved and spoiled them.

*soul;*



*soul*; How is this any argument that *nephef* signifies a *dead body*?

BUT supposing *Nephef*, or the *soul*, which is often used for the *person* or the *man*, may be sometimes put for a *dead man*, or (if you please) the *dead carcase of a man*: yet I deny that *Sheól* ever signifies the *grave*. And therefore when we find *Sheól* and *Nephef* put together, both must be taken in their proper signification.

The Hebrew word for *grave* is קבר *Keber*, used perhaps an hundred times throughout the Bible, and, what is remarkable, *Nephef* never joined with it, as it is with *Sheól*. For indeed this last was as properly the receptacle of the *Soul*, in the opinion of the ancients, as *Keber* of the *dead body*.

BUT if *Keber* signify a *particular grave*, may not *Sheól* denote a sort of *general grave* or *sepulchre*? Or the one mean an *artificial grave*, the other the *natural*?

THESE indeed have been the suggestions of very eminent writers upon this subject; for the learned disputant, when hard pressed, is seldom at a loss to save himself by a subtle distinction. Nevertheless, they who advance a thing so strange as this, would have done well to produce at least one or other example of the kind, by way of parallel, which I question whether all the languages of the world can supply them with.

IT is a usual thing in speech, to put a word, which, in strictness, denotes but one individual, to stand for the whole species. And thus *Keber*, upon occasion, might very well signify a common grave; as man is sometimes put for all mankind. But for *Keber* to signify a single grave, and *Sheól* the common one, or the same thing taken universally, is something so extraordinary, that I believe it would be difficult to match it.

IF *Sheól* then mean any thing at all, it is plain from the use of the word in Scripture, that it denotes the place, where the souls of men were believed to go away at their death.

THE third way I mentioned of coming at the meaning of a word, is by consulting the translations of it into other languages.

AND here we have an argument for the sense of the word, which seems to me unanswerable. I mean, the well known practice of the Septuagint translators of the Old Testament, in turning *Sheol* by *Hades*, (*αἰδης*) and this approved and followed, and so a sanction added to it, by the writers of the New Testament.

THERE are above sixty places in the Old Testament, where the word *Sheol* occurs; and it is constantly translated *Hades* by the Seventy, except in one or two places \* at the most, where the word *θάνατος*, or *death*, is crept in, I know not how, and without the least apparent reason for the change.

NOW that *Hades*, in the Greek, was always understood to mean the place where souls go away at death, is what none can doubt, who are but a little conversant with the Greek authors.

WHEN therefore the writers of the New Testament, where they quote from the Old, without scruple use the Septuagint translation, where the word *Hades* is put for *Sheol*: Does not this shew them to be of the same mind with these translators? viz. that *Hades*, in its usual acceptation for the place of souls *after death*, expressed exactly what was meant by *Sheol* in the Old Testament.

To illustrate this by an example—St. Peter argues from that of the Psalmist, Ps. xvi. 10. *Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol*, or to *Sheol* (*האֵד*) that our Saviour was to rise from the dead; this being a plain prediction, that his soul was not to be left in *Sheol*, but was to return from thence to animate his body anew. St. Luke, who wrote in Greek, where he records this reasoning of St. Peter, uses the Septuagint

\* Viz. Prov. xxiii. 14. and 2 Sam. xxii. 6. But this last can scarce be regarded as an exception; since though it be here *אֵד*, *Sheol*, in Psalm xviii. 5. (where the same hymn is repeated) it is *אֵד*.



translation of this passage, *Thou wilt not leave my soul as ads, in Hades, or to Hades*, Acts ii. 27. Had those, for whom St. Luke writes, any other notion of *Hades*, than as a place where souls departed go? Must not *Sheól* then, in St. Luke's apprehension, signify the same thing, if he intended to give a true representation of St. Peter's reasoning?

LET US NOW consider what has been objected against this sense of the word *Sheól*. And, I think, there is but one objection of any force; and that is drawn from the situation of the place.

FOR it is certain, that the situation of *Sheól*, in the vulgar opinion, was downward; nay the very lowest place they had any conception of. And hence it is, that we find *Sheól* and *Shamaim*, (or heaven) opposed to each other for heighth and depth, as I before observed.

ON the contrary, Solomon seems to say, that the souls of men go upward at their death, Eccles. iii. 21. *Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward? and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?* This (I think) is the only text of Scripture, that seems to contradict the notion we are contending for.

BUT the question is, Whether Solomon here speaks according to the vulgar belief, or according to the philosophical notions, which werethen beginning to obtain in the world. If according to the latter, his meaning may be only this; That it is difficult from any speculations about the nature of the souls of men and brutes, to prove that they go different ways at their death, or that the one is immortal, and the other not. And we find most of those, who have speculated upon the subject, allow, that there is a difficulty in it.

ON the other hand, when he speaks according to the vulgar notion or belief, he evidently supposes that all go to *Sheól*. As Eccles. ix. 10. where he exhorts men to do the work they have to do in this world with *all their might*, from this consideration, that *there*

is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in *Sheól*, whither they were going. That is, the season for work would then be over, and men's everlasting state determined. And whatever knowledge or wisdom they were possessed of, unless they made a right use of it here, would be of no significancy to them in the other world.

FOR there is no necessity (as some think) that *Sheól* should here mean the *grave*; and had Solomon intended this sense, he would certainly have used the word *Keber*, which properly signifies the *grave*.

THERE is indeed but one place, that I know of, in all the Old Testament, where there could be the least shew of reason for turning *Sheól* the *grave*; and that shall be considered in the following section.

IN the mean time it appears, that this word with Solomon, as well as the other sacred writers, means the place where souls departed were believed to go.

I SAY, *were believed to go*—— For this (it is to be remembred) is all that we are concerned about; not whether the souls of the dead really went to *Sheól*, but whether they were believed to do so by the ancients under the Old Testament. Or whether *Sheól*, with them, meant a place where the souls or spirits of men (I make no distinction; for, I think, the ancients made none) go away at their death.

No, says a learned commentator; '*Sheól*, with the most ancient writers, signifies nothing more, than either the grave, or death, or the state of the dead, whatever that be.' This he affirms roundly; and it may not be amiss to examine a little into the validity of his assertion.

It is Mons. Le Clerc I mean, in his note on this very text of Solomon, (Ecclef. iii. 21.) *Who knoweth the spirit of a man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?*

AFTER quoting a passage from St. Jerome, wherein he says, that 'before Christ's coming all went alike *ad inferos* (for that learned father took *inferi*,



*Hades*, and *Sbeöl*, to mean the same \*) Le Clerc observes, 'that supposing this were so, Solomon could know nothing of it, since it is not revealed in the Old Testament. And moreover,' says he, 'this opinion, though it was thought true by most of the ancients, is plainly false; as it rests only upon a wrong interpretation, by which *Schol* (so he writes it) was supposed to be the *Hades* of the Greeks, or *infern* of the Latins, and that in a worse sense, for a place of darkness; when the word signifies nothing more with the most ancient writers, than the grave, or death, or the state of the dead, whatever that be' †

AND as St. Jerome, amongst other passages in support of this notion, had produced our Saviour's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus ‡, *the one with Abraham, and other in torments, but both apud inferos*, (or in *Sbeöl*, as he understands it) *though there was a great gulph interposed between them*: to this Le Clerc replies; that 'from a parable nothing can be collected; otherwise (says he) we must conclude likewise, that souls have bodies after death, and that the dead, the blessed and damned, converse together' ||. Thus this learned critic——

\* St. Jerome sometimes uses the latin word *infern*, sometimes *infernus*; and defines it to be a place where souls are kept, either in refreshment or pain, according to their merits——*Locus in quo anime recluduntur, sive in refrigerio, sive in pœnis, pro qualitate meritorum.* Hier. in Hoseam, cap. 13, 14.

† Sed præterea opinio hæc, licet a plerisque veterum vera habita fuerit, plane est falsa; cum nitatur tantum præva interpretatione, qua *Schol* putabatur esse ædificæ Græcorum, aut *infern* Latinorum, & quidem deteriore sensu, pro loco tenebricoso; cum vox nihil significat, apud antiquissimos Scriptores, præter sepulcrum, aut mortem, aut statum mortuorum, quicunque esset. Le Clerc in Eccles. 3. 21. p. 691. Col. 2.

‡ Et Evangelium Chædi magnum interpositum apud inferos, & Abrahamum cum Lazaro, & Divitem in suppliciis esse testatur. Hieron. in Eccles. 3. 21. Op. Tom. 5. Col. 26. Edit. Mar. Victorii.

|| Sed e parabola nihil colligi potest; alioqui statuendum etiam esset animis post mortem esse corpora, colloquique mortuos, beatos & damnatos inter se. Le Cl. ibid.

OTHERS have said, that every circumstance of a parable is not to be drawn into argument: but I know of none before that ever said, that 'Nothing can be collected from a parable.' Of what use then is a parable? Or, What instruction can it afford?

IF our Saviour had any design at all in this parable, certainly thus much may be collected from it, that the souls of men exist after death, and are in a happy or a miserable state, as they have been good or bad in this life. And if the souls of men exist, they must exist somewhere: and that somewhere is called *inferi*, *Hades*, or *Sbeöl*, by the ancients, as they expressed the same thing in different languages.

As the evangelist, in this parable, calls the place where the rich man's soul was, by the Greek word *Hades*; so our Saviour, if he spoke in Hebrew or Syriac, used undoubtedly the word *Sbeöl*; and so the Syriac version of the Greek Testament ܬܫܬܐ, Luke xvi. 23. Did our Saviour use an improper word then? Or did the Evangelist turn it improperly by the word *Hades*? If neither of these can be supposed, what room is there to say that *Sbeöl* does not signify the same as *Hades*, and to mean the region of departed souls?

YET farther, going to *Sbeöl*, and being gathered to their fathers, are, I think, terms equivalent in the Old Testament, when spoken of good men, (I cannot find that the phrase of being gathered to their fathers, or their people, is ever used of wicked men.) To be carried into Abraham's bosom, spoken of Lazarus by our Saviour, is much the same, as if it had been said, that he was gathered to this great forefather of the Jews. Since therefore good men, all along under the Old Testament, expected to go to *Sbeöl*, and yet be gathered to their fathers; they must suppose the souls of their fathers to be in *Sbeöl*. And if Abraham, their renowned ancestor, was with the rest of their fathers; why then, to be in Abraham's



bosom, will still be to be in *Sheöl*, though in the happiest part of it however.

As to what he adds, that we may as well infer from the parable, that souls have bodies after death, and that the dead, the blessed, and damned, hold conferences with each other; though there be no necessity to allow his inference; yet I cannot but observe, that very good philosophers have, without any absurdity, supposed, that the separate soul subsists in a material vehicle; and that souls may have a way of conversing together, though we have no conceptions how they do so: so that even this circumstance of the parable is far from having any thing unnatural in it, or improbable.

BUT what then is his notion of the word *Hades*, as used by our Saviour in this parable? Why he tells us just after, that in *Hades* means, in death, or in the state of death: in which *ad captum plebis*, 'by way of condescension to vulgar capacities, the dead are supposed to be in a certain place, and to be able to talk together'.

To suppose the dead then to be in a certain place, is (it seems) a vulgar imagination, and a vulgar error.

NOW I have really so vulgar an understanding, that I can form no notion of the dead's being in a certain state, and not a certain place too. For if the dead are no where, they are not in being; and then *Sheöl* or *Hades* can signify nothing. If they are in being, they are somewhere; and then *Sheöl* or *Hades*, (in the opinion of the ancients) signifies that somewhere, or that place wherever it be, where the dead, according to them, were supposed to exist; as appears beyond contradiction from the use of the word in Scripture.

\* *Kal is vñ qđn, hoc est, & in morte, vel in statu mortis, quo, ad captum plebis, statuuntur mortui, in certo quodam loco esse, & colloquia servatos inter & damnatos haberi posse.* Le Clerc in Eccles. 3. 21. p. 691. Col. 2.

BUT

BUT how exist? In their dry dust? No, he himself thought it too absurd to say here, that *Sheol* or *Hades* may signify the grave. For that the dead should converse there, is too gross even for vulgar apprehensions. It must signify the place where the souls of the dead exist then, if it signify any thing, and if the souls of the dead exist at all.

IN short, suppose such a place as *Hades* or *Sheol*, where the souls of men go away at death; and the rest of the parable has all the probability that is required to a thing of that kind. Remove but this foundation, and every thing in it must appear unnatural and improbable.

THERE is a remarkable passage, Isaiah xiv. where *Sheol* is evidently described as the region of departed souls; and the dead kings and tyrants of the earth are poetically represented as rising from their seats or thrones to meet the King of Babylon at his coming among them.

VER. 9. *Sheol from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead (Heb. the Rephaim manes, or ghosts) for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.*

10. *All they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? &c.*

NOW had there been no such place as *Sheol*, (in the common opinion and belief at least) or no *Rephaim* there; the very supposition of their meeting the king of Babylon at his coming, would be absurd and impossible, and all this beautiful allusion to the received notions and opinions of those antient times, would be unintelligible jargon.

WHEN Homer, at the conclusion of the *Odyssey*, sends the souls of the slaughtered woovers to *Hades*, where they meet with the ghosts of Achilles, Agamemnon, and the rest; as no one doubts but there was such a place as *Hades* in the opinion of Homer's countrymen, though this meeting be a fiction of the poets; so there can be as little reason to doubt, but there was such a place



place as *Sbeól*, in the opinion of the Jews of Hsiah's time, though we were to consider the meeting here described betwixt the king of Babylon and the *Rephaim*, as a sort of poetical fiction, like that of Homer.

It seems to have been a favourite thought with Pindar; at least, it is a compliment he uses, more than once, to the champions whose victories he celebrates, that their dead ancestors in *Hades* would rejoice to hear of the honours they had won\*. Had *Hades* signified with them, what these gentlemen would have *Sbeól* to signify among the Hebrews, either Nothing or the Grave; and had they believed that their dead ancestors were become nothing but a heap of dust; What sense could there be in such a compliment as this? Or what possible room for it?

As little room could there be for the representation, here given by the prophet, of the *Rephaim* or ghosts rising from their seats in *Sbeól* to meet the king of Babylon at his coming; had not *Sbeól*, in the common belief, meant the region of the dead, or of departed souls.

I know but of one thing that can possibly be objected, and that is, that Hsiah here speaking of a heathen prince, might accommodate himself to the opinions of the Heathen, and ridicule them in their own way; which, I confess, is not improbable, and adds a keenness to the sarcasms here used.

BUT nevertheless we are to remember, that he uses the language of the Jews, and puts a song into the mouth of Jews. And if *Sbeól*, with them, had not signified in common usage the place of separate souls, how could they have understood the meaning of it here, where it is put to denote such a place?

\* See Pind. Olymp. 8, towards the end. Εἰσαὶ δὲ θρυαλίδος ἀνὸρ-  
γας ἰπῶν ἀγρίδας, &c.

And Olymp. 14. — Μεδαστερχία δόμων φερεφόρας τῆς αἰχῆς, &c. So  
Nem. 4. — Κίρκος ἀμφ' Ἀχίλλεος, &c.

There is a fourth example (as I remember) somewhere——

MOREOVER, if Ifaiah here expreffes the place of feparate fouls (according to the opinion of the Heathen, and which the Greeks called *Hades*) by the Hebrew word *Sheól*, this feems to be an unquestionable authority for the Septuagint translators to turn *Sheól* back again into the Greek word *Hades*, by which was always meant the place of feparate fouls.

BUT to return to Monf. Le Clerc—— I muft obferve, that though he fays here, that *Sheól* fignifies nothing more than the ftate of death, or the grave, he contradicts himfelf elfewhere, and tells us that ‘*Sheól*, with the Hebrews, fignified the lower part of the world, or that which is under our feet, about the centre of the earth, and which they oppofed to heaven.’ Note on Job xi. 8.\*

HERE then he allows *Sheól* to mean a place, and that a place different from the grave. But ftill he is mistaken in the fituation of it; for the Hebrews did not think *Sheól* lay at the centre of the earth, but rather that it comprehended the whole lower hemisphere of the univerfe. And if fo, the place is large enough to difpofe of all the fouls that ever lived, or fhall live, in their proper claffes or ftations; and the fouls of good men might find there a feat of reft and hope, and of all that happinefs which belonged to them, or their great Creator fhould think fit to confer upon them, though we fuppofe them to have gone to the downward fkyes—— unless up and down in the univerfe have a neceffary connection with our ideas of happinefs and mifery. One would think fo indeed, from the panick fome have fallen into at the very apprehenfion of the word *descending* ufed in the Creed †, and

\* *Vocant Hebraei יָאֵשׁוּם infimam partem mundi, feu quæ eft fub pedibus noſtris, circa telluris centrum, eamque opponere ſolent cælo.*

† By the way, there is no neceffity of taking the word κατελθόν, (or, *descended*) in the Creed, in the ſtrict ſenſe for going to a lower place. For it has been obſerved, that it is “uſed at leaſt ten times in the Acts of the Apoſtles; and in none of all theſe places ſignifieth any descending from a higher place to a lower, but a re-  
“moving



and in the places of Scripture where *Sheol* is mentioned. As if it were not in the power of God to make the soul as happy as he please in the intermediate state, be the place of its residence where it will.

THERE seems to be the same grossness of conception in that other objection of Le Clerc, concerning the darkness of these lower regions; by which the ancients only meant, perhaps, the invisibility of them.

"*Sheol*, says he, by the greatest part of the ancients, was taken to be the *Hades* of the Greeks, or the *infern* of the Latins, and that in a worse sense, *pro loco tenebricoso*, for a place of darkness"——

BUT how, in a worse sense? One would think he had never read the descriptions given us of those gloomy regions by Homer or Virgil; the *sine sole domos*, (*Æn.* vi. 534.) of the one, or the *Ἡπεί και ῥεφειν νενεαρομενοι*, (*Hom. Od.* x. 15.) of the other.

MOREOVER, when this learned critic made so childish an objection, where was his philosophy all the while? For did he take the light of the sun to be the light of the soul? Or was he a stranger to those noble passages of Scripture, which describe the heavenly Jerusalem as having no more the\* light of the sun, nor any need of it; but as being infinitely more blessed in the enjoyment of that uncreated light, which can neither set, nor suffer diminution—at whose brightness the *moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed*, (*Isai* xxiv. 23.) And may not the same uncreated light reach the intermediate state, if God see fit, or shed its influence where he please? It were to be wished that men would converse a little more with the prophetic books of Scripture, if it were only to raise their ideas of things.

IN short, the objection before us is neither becoming a philosopher nor a divine.

"moving simply from one place to another"—I give the words of the most learned archbishop Usher, in his answer to the *Jesuit's Challenge*, p. 396.

\* *Isai.* lx. 19, 20.      *Revel.* xxi. 23.      *Ch.* xxii. 5.

I MUST

I MUST however again remind the reader, that our enquiry is, not about the real place of souls, but the place where they were believed to go, under the Old Testament— And supposing they were mistaken as to the situation of the place, or darkness of the state, (as it must be allowed, that they had no very perfect, nor very chearful notions of it) yet still *Sheol* will signify the place where souls departed go, according to the opinion of these ancients. If they were wrong in this belief, it might please God however to suffer them to continue in such an error as this. For who shall say, that he was obliged to correct every little mistake in their divinity, (if this may be so termed) any more than to set them right in every point of philosophy. God vouchsafes to every age such a measure of light and knowledge as he sees fit. If the ancient Hebrews had but imperfect notions of the intermediate state, they believed the subsistence of the separate soul however in a certain place and state; and had expectations of a *future resurrection and a day of judgment*. And so far their belief was right, and of force enough to influence their conduct, if honestly attended to; though a more clear discovery of these great truths be exhibited to us in the Gospel, together with additional proofs of them that are incontestable.

## S E C T. VII.

IT was the misfortune of our translators of the Old Testament, that they could find no word in the English tongue to answer to the Hebrew word *שְׁאוֹל*, *Sheol*, and therefore they sometimes translate it *hell*, and sometimes the *grave*; but both improperly—I mean, as the word *hell* is now appropriated to the place of the damned.

THE authors of the Septuagint translation, (as I have observed) always render it by *Hades*, the well-known Greek word for the place of souls; except in one or two places, where the word *ᾍδης* occurs. But they



never render it by *τάφος*, or any other word that may denote the *grave*; and therefore this was a sense, we may conclude, entirely unknown to these translators.

If there be any one place, that may seem to favour such a translation; it is Psalm cxli. 7. *Our bones lie scattered at the grave's mouth*.—For the grave being the proper receptacle of the dead body, it seems more natural to say, our bones lie scattered at the mouth of the grave, than at the mouth of *Sheól*, the region of departed souls; (though to say the truth, one can scarce see a reason for either expression,) and yet even here the Seventy turn it by *Hades*.

BUT as this is entitled, *a Psalm of David*, and therefore probably the passage before us may have a reference to some act of cruelty done by Saul, in that long persecution which David suffered from him: suppose, instead of *le-pi Sheól*, (*at the mouth of Sheól*) we should read it *le-pi Saul*, *at the mouth*, that is, the command of *Saul*. The Hebrew letters for *Sheól* and *Saul* are the same; and therefore it may be so read, without the least alteration of the text: and we find *yal pi Pharaoh*, at the command of Pharaoh, Gen. xlv. 21. *yal pi Jehova*, frequently, at the command of *Jehova*\*. And *le-pi* is much the same; the *l* being only an abbreviation of the prepositions *yal* or *el*, and partakes therefore of the signification of both. Thus *lepi yedim*, *ad os testium*, at the mouth or testimony of witnesses, Num. xxxv. 30.

To deal fairly with the reader however, I must not pass by an objection that was offered to me against this interpretation of the words, *viz.* That we do not find, that David ever mentions Saul by name, in any of the Psalms. And it is true we do not, as they stand at present, (I mean) and with the present pointing. But this is no argument, but that Saul might be mentioned in the first composition of these psalms, when David made them for his private use; and that afterwards, when

\* So Job xxxix. 27. *Debt the eagle mount up at thy command*; is in the Hebrew *yal peca* (יָלַע עֵצָא) *at thy mouth*.

when received into the public service of the church, they might undergo some little alterations. That which was originally Saul, and had something in it too particular perhaps to suit the publick service, at the distance of some centuries, might be easily changed, in the pronunciation, into *Sheól*; which, if it gave a tolerable sense, might be thought sufficient. Perhaps *cheblé Sheól*, (as it is read) Psal. xviii. 5. the snares of *Sheól* (or death) might be originally *cheblé Saul*, the snares of Saul; since the very title of the Psalm shews it to be a Thanksgiving of David's, composed by him upon occasion of *God's delivering him from the band of all his enemies, and* (particularly) *from the band of Saul*.

THAT some of these Psalms have passed through more than one edition, and have been altered and adapted to a new occasion, is what may be collected from comparing the Psalm itself with the title. Thus Psalm li. confessedly a Psalm of David, and so intitled, has a prayer at the conclusion, that does not seem very reconcileable with the circumstances of things in David's time, but suits the Jews in their captivity; and therefore was probably added at this time, to make this penitential Psalm of David's more useful to them, by annexing this short prayer for their return, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, in the two last verses——*Be favourable and gracious unto Sion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem, &c.*

NOR will this detract from the divine authority of these sacred hymns: for we may be sure, that these alterations or additions, whatever they were, being designed for publick use, and the solemn service of the Jewish church, were not permitted to be made, but by persons duly qualified for it, viz. prophets or inspired persons: of whom they seldom wanted one, at least, in every king's reign. And in the captivity they had Ezekiel, Daniel, Esdras; as, after the captivity, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

It is very remarkable, that Psalm cviii. is made out of two other Psalms of David, with some small  
from varia-



variations, viz. a part of Psalm lvii. and part of Psalm lx. It is not likely, that this was done by David himself; but very natural to think, that some inspired person in the Jewish church might, instead of composing a new Psalm upon some particular occasion, take a part out of each of these Psalms, famous for their being of David's composition, and for their title *Misham*, (that is, *Golden Hymns*) and accommodate it to their present circumstances to be used in the publick worship. And as this Psalm was compiled out of two of David's, it might still be called David's, as it now bears that title.

If this observation be right, we should be cautious how we adjudge those Psalms that carry the title, *le-David*, to any other writer, upon account of any single sentence or two, that may bear the mark of later times; since this little alteration might be made by some prophet in the Jewish church, to adapt it the better to some particular occasion afterwards arising; and yet David still have the honour of the composition.

FROM what has been said, I hope it appears, that so small a change as that of *Saul* into *Sheol*, which is only a different pronounciation of the same word, may be easily supposed to have happened. But whether I be right in this conjecture, will best be seen, perhaps, from the Psalm itself. This I am sure of, that it gave me the first hint of a much better explication of it, than any I have met with; which is no great boast, for indeed the commentators scarce make sense of it. And as an attempt to illustrate any part of holy Scripture, will, I hope, be looked on as a very pardonable digression, I shall here venture to explain this Psalm at large.

#### *Psalm cxli. explained.*

To understand this Psalm aright, we should be perfect masters of the history to which it refers. The title tells us, it is a Psalm of David. And since we are left to guess at the particular occasions upon which  
most

most of the Psalms were composed; it is happy for us, that the story of this excellent Prince should be recorded in the sacred books, (where, for the most part, we have only a *compendium* of things) so largely and minutely, far beyond that of any other king of Israel or Judah; that from hence we might derive the necessary lights to help us to a right understanding of this noble collection of Divine Hymns; a great part whereof, if not the greatest part, were, without doubt, of his composing.

Now by comparing this Psalm of David's with his history, it seems probable to me, that he composed it just before his flight to Achish king of Gath; when he had a second time spared Saul's life, (as we read 1 Sam. xxvi.) but could trust him no longer. Upon which he takes the resolution thus expressed, Chap. xxvii. 1. *And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul* (that is, I am in great danger of perishing, if I stay longer in my own country; for here is no distrust of providence, as some suppose; unless the contriving and making use of proper means for his own safety, which every wise man does, and is obliged to do, must be supposed to argue a distrust of providence—— But he proceeds) *there is nothing better for me, than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me to seek me any more in any coast of Israel; so shall I escape out of his band.* Upon which follows the execution of his purpose, Ver. 2. *And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath.*

As his resolution was to fly *speedily*, there is no question but he did so, either the same night after his parting with Saul, or by the first morning's light. And it was in the evening of that day, when he was now upon the wing, as it were, with his late dutiful behaviour towards Saul, and the other's implacable cruelty towards him and his followers still fresh upon his thoughts; and moreover, reflecting  
upon



upon the dangers and temptations to which his religion would expose him in a Heathen country, that he pours out his soul to God in the following prayer or soliloquy. For that it was composed in the evening, appears from his desiring, Ver. 2. that it might be accepted as an *evening-oblation*.

I SHALL give the Hebrew, the literal translation, and the paraphrase together; that so the learned reader may compare the one with the other, and have a full purport of the Psalm before him in one view.

## PSALM CXLI.

### A PSALM of DAVID.

#### The HEBREW and *Literal Translation*.

ו. י יהוה קראתיך חושה לי  
האזינה קולי בקראי-לך:

Ver. 1. Jehovah kera-thica, chufhah li, haazi-nah koli be-korei lac.

Ver. 1. *Jehovah, I call upon thee, haste thee unto me, give ear to my voice, when I cry unto thee.*

2. תבון תפילתי קטרת לפניך  
משאת בפי מנחת-ערב:

2. Ticeon tepillathi ke-toreth le-paneca, masse-ath cappai minchath ya-reb.

2. *Let my prayer be set forth (as) incense before thee;*  
the

#### The PARAPHRASE.

Ver. 1. I call upon thee, O Jehova, thou everlasting and unchangeable Being, Creator and Governor of all things; the supreme hope and refuge of thy distressed servants: haste thee unto me. Give ear to my voice, when I cry unto thee.

2. Thou seeest that I am banished from thy tabernacle, the place of thy more solemn worship, where thou hast promised thy especial presence, and hast commanded us to approach and seek thee: nevertheless I know that thou thy-

The HEBREW and *Literal Translation.*

*the lifting up of my hands  
(as) an evening-oblation.*

3 שִׁיתָּה יְהוָה שְׂמֵרָה לִפִּי  
נִצְרָה עַל־דַּל שְׁפָתַי :

3. Shithah, Jehovah,  
shomrah le-pi, nitzerah  
yal dal sepathai.

3. Set, O Lord \*, a  
watch to my mouth, a guard  
over the door of my lips.

The PARAPHRASE.

thyself art present every where. Let my prayer therefore come before thee, in the purity and fervour of my heart, like that cloud of incense and perfume, which mounts up from thy holy altar; and let the lifting up of my hands towards thy throne in heaven, be as the *evening-oblation* there offered thee.

3. I AM now going to seek a retreat from the persecutions of my master Saul amidst a race of idolaters, who will be curious to observe all my words and actions; and will attempt to draw me in to be a partaker with them in their idol-worship; or suspect me as a spy and enemy, if I refuse to comply with them. But do thou, O Lord, set a watch before my mouth, a guard over the door of my lips; that I may neither endanger my own safety by my imprudent carriage, nor violate my religion by any weak compliances.

\* Here again the word in the Hebrew is Jehovah, most commonly rendered *Lord* in our translation.



The HEBREW and *Literal*  
*Translation.*

4 אל-תס-לבי לדבר רע  
להתעולל עלילות ברשע את-  
אישים פעל-און ובל-אלהם  
במנעמיהם :

4. Al tat libbi le-dabar  
ray, le-hithyolel yaliloth  
be-reshay eth ishim poyalé  
awen, u-bal elcham be-  
manyammchem.

4. *Incline not mine heart  
to an evil thing, to at-  
tempt enterprizes in wick-  
edness with men that work  
iniquity (or idolatry) neither  
let me eat of their dainties.*

5 יהלמני צדיק חסד ויכחני  
שמן ראש אליני ראשי כי-עוד  
ותפלתי ברשתיהם :

5. Jehelmeni tzaddik  
chesed, ve-jocicheni she-  
men rosh, al jani roshi,  
ci yod-u-tepillathi bera-  
yothehem.

5. *Let the just man be  
still upbraiding me with my  
goodness, and let the oint-  
ment of my head be urged  
against me; it shall not break  
my head: for hitherto—  
yea, my prayer against their  
wickednesses.*

The

## The PARAPHRASE,

4. PRESERVE me from  
that greatest of all evils,  
the renouncing thee to fol-  
low vain and strange gods.  
Let me not be guilty of  
this heinous and presump-  
tuous sin, no not so much  
as in thought. Let me ab-  
hor to play the hypocrite,  
by joining in the abomi-  
nations of the Heathen,  
though but in shew and  
appearance only. Nor let  
me ever be allured by their  
lascivious rites, or their  
luxurious meats, to mix in  
their religious festivals.

5. As for my past be-  
haviour towards Saul, I  
can never repent of it,  
whilst I am conscious I have  
done my duty. Though  
my friends and followers,  
those *advocates for strict  
justice, are still upbraiding  
me with my excessive piety  
and goodness; and though  
the ointment of my head,  
thy designation of me to  
the throne, be urged against  
me, either as a reason why  
I might justly take the  
life of Saul, or as the  
cause that he will never  
cease to persecute me: yet*  
I trust

The HEBREW and *Literal*  
Translation.

The PARAPHRASE.

וְנִשְׁמַעְתִּי בִידֵי-סֵלַע שִׁפְפֵיהֶם  
וְשָׁמַעְתִּי אִמְרֵי כִי נָעֻמוּ

6. Nishmetu b-idé selay  
shophetehem, ve-shameyu  
amarai ci nayemu.

6. Their judges have been  
dismissed in the rocky places,  
and have heard my words  
that they were sweet.

7. Cemo poleach u-bo-  
keay baaretz, niphzeru  
yatzamenu le-pi Saul.

7. Like as when one cut-  
teth and cleaveth, (so) have  
our

I trust in thy mercy, it  
shall not break my head, or  
bring me to destruction.  
For hitherto it has not done  
it, and I am safe under  
thy protection; and yet my  
prayers are all that I have  
opposed against the wicked  
attempts of my enemies.

6. How generous and  
forgiving hath my be-  
haviour been to them?  
Their princes, those se-  
vere judges, who have  
sentenced me, and those  
that favour me, to death,  
have nevertheless been,  
more than once, dismis-  
sed by me in safety, when  
I had them absolutely in  
my power in those rocky  
deserts; and have only  
heard me expostulate with  
them in the mildest and  
the gentlest manner.

7. But how unlike,  
how barbarous has their  
treatment been of me!  
my best friends slaugh-  
tered in great numbers at  
the command of Saul,  
and hewed in pieces in  
his presence, as one would  
cut



The HEBREW and *Literal*  
*Translation.*

## The PARAPHRASE.

*our bones been scattered on  
the earth at the command of  
Saul. J. Pilkington*

8 כי אלך יהוה אדני עיני  
בכה חסיתי אלהיך נפשי

8. Ci eleca, Jehovah  
Adonai, yenai, beca cha-  
sithi, al teyar naphshi.

8. For mine eyes are un-  
to thee, Jehovah my Lord;  
in thee have I trusted, make  
not my soul naked.

9 שמרני מיד פח יקשולי  
ומקשורי פעלי און

9. Shomreni m-idé pach  
jakeshu li, u-mokeshoth  
poyalé awen.

9. Preserve me from the  
trap they have laid for me,  
and from the snares of the  
workers of iniquity, or ido-  
latry.

cut or chop a piece of  
wood.

8. THAT after so much  
cruel usage, I have still  
been able to preserve my  
innocence and my duty,  
has been owing to thy  
grace, and that full trust  
I have in thee, my Lord  
and everlasting God. To  
thee do I lift up mine  
eyes. On thee, without  
reserve, will I still place  
my confidence and hope.  
Oh let my life be preci-  
ous in thy sight; and suf-  
fer me not, by any fla-  
grant sin, to forfeit my  
title to the life eternal.

9. PRESERVE me from  
the snares laid for me by  
my own countrymen on  
the one hand; and the  
idol-worshippers, to whom  
I am now driven for re-  
fuge, on the other.

The

The

The HEBREW and *Literal*  
*Translation.*

The PARAPHRASE.

יִפְּלוּ בַמַּכְמְרֵי רָשָׁעִים  
יָדָד אֲנִי עַד־אֵעֶבֶר :

10. Jippelu be-mac-  
moraiv refhayim jachad,  
anoci yad eyebor.

10. *The wicked shall fall  
into their own nets together;  
(and) I shall still escape.*

10. My prayer, I trust,  
is heard. I feel a beam of  
light break in upon my  
soul, which fills me with  
this comfortable assurance,  
that *these wicked men shall  
be taken in their own nets,  
and that I shall still escape.*

THE reader will be apt to think, perhaps, that there is more in this paraphrase than in the psalm itself: but let him place himself in David's situation, and he will scarce find a single thought here used, but what the words themselves suggest. Nevertheless, as the translation of some of the verses will appear new to him, I shall proceed to vindicate the sense I have given the whole, by a thorough exposition or commentary on the text.

THE first verse is an invocation of the true God by his incommunicable name Jehovah, as the one eternal, self-existent, and unchangeable Being, Creator and Governor of all things. And the earnest and repeated call here used by the psalmist, (*haste thee unto me; give ear to my voice*) sufficiently declares him to have been in a situation of the utmost distress.

THE next verse shews him at a distance from the tabernacle, where all their solemn prayers, together with their daily sacrifices, were offered up. And therefore, with his face probably directed thither, he begs that God would accept of all that was in his power to perform, viz. The devotion of his heart, and the elevation of his hands in prayer. *Let my prayer be set forth as incense, &c.* As if he had said, Though this address of mine must necessarily want all that so-



lemnity of preparation required in the service of thy holy tabernacle, the cloud of incense and perfume, the mincha or oblation of fine flower, &c. yet let the purity and fervour of my heart, and the innocency of my hands, now lifted up to thee in this sad hour of my distress, be accepted in stead of all these, and prevail for deliverance and a safe retreat to me and my companions.

The *lifting up* of my hands, the Hebrew is, כַּפַּי *cappai*, palms. This was the ancient way with the Hebrews, as well as others, to lift the palms of their hands towards heaven in prayer \*. שִׁמְחֵנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כַּפַּי, *expandi ad te palmas meas*, Pf. lxxxviii. 10.

To proceed—— The third and fourth verses are a petition, that God would protect him by his grace from any weak compliance, either in thought, word, or deed, with the idolatrous religion of the Heathen; to which, in his state of exile, he foresaw he should have great temptations.

WHAT favours this sense, is the expression used verse 4. *with men that work iniquity, poyalé auen*. The word *auen*, or *aven*, here translated iniquity, being so commonly used for idolatry, that when *Beth-el* (the house of God) became profaned by Jeroboam's calf, it was called in contempt *Beth-aven*, the house of iniquity or idolatry. So Isaiah xxxi. 2. The idolatrous Egyptians are characterised under this expression; and their help, which the Jews were forbidden to seek, called *Voxtath poyalé auen, the help of them that work iniquity*, that is, idolatry.

BUT what is most observable in these two verses, is the great abhorrence which David here shews of the worship paid to idols, (the great prohibition of the

\* This custom seems to have generally prevailed. *Cælo supinas st tuleris manus*, (says Horace, who ever uses the most apt words—) —*tendoque supinas ad cælum cum voce manus*, says Æneas in Virgil, (*Æn. iii. 176.*) And so old Æschylus represents the women in a publick calamity, as praying the gods ὑψίστηναι χεῖρας. Upon which Stanly, in his note—*Gestus olim supplicatorius protendere manus in palmam resupinatas*, &c. in Prom. Vinc. v. 1004,

Mosaic law) the guilt whereof appeared to this good man in so strong a light, that he labours for words to express it; and has used all the force and energy of the Hebrew language (which is remarkable for its energy) to this purpose.

AFTER praying, ver. 3. that God would give him the wisdom, to govern his tongue, amidst that race of idolaters to whom he was now about to fly for refuge; who would be very likely to suspect him for a spy and a concealed enemy, and would be curious to observe every word that should drop from him——  
*Set a watch, O Lord, to my mouth, a guard over the door of my lips*—— He adds, ver. 4. *Incline not mine heart to an evil thing, to attempt enterprizes in wickedness with men that work iniquity; neither let me eat of their delicacies.*

I HAVE turned it as literally as I could; but the English does by no means come up to the force and beauty of the original. To attempt enterprizes, should have been to *enterprize enterprizes*, if our way of speaking would have born it; for the two Hebrew words are the same. And this is one peculiar grace of this most simple and venerable language, that the using the same word twice does, like adding one unit to another, augment or double the signification. So that *l-bitbyolel yaliloth*, with the *be-resbang*, (in wickedness) added to it, is to attempt something desperately bold and wicked.

INDEED the word *yalal* (*yalel*) itself carries in it the idea of something arduous and daring; for it bears a plain affinity with the verb *yalab* (*yalab*) to climb, and seems to be only *yalab yal* (*yalab yal*) united†. *Ad calam, jufferis, ibit*—— according to the poet.

BUT it is worth observing how the sense rises by degrees, as every word proceeds. *L-bitbyolel*, to enter-

† I know of no word that comes so near the Hebrew *yalilab*, as the Latin *facinus*; which is sometimes used in a good sense, but most commonly in a bad; and always means something great and daring in its kind.



prize, raises an expectation of something great. *L-bitb-volet yalilotb*, the same word repeated, and that in the plural number, augments the signification very much, and carries the expectation higher. The following word, *be-refbang*, fixes down the sense to something greatly wicked. And *etb ishim poyalé auen*, compleats the whole, and gives an image of the highest piece of wickedness.

To which I might add, that this gradation in the sense is admirably expressed in the very sound of the words; as any one that has an ear for sounds will soon perceive †. An excellency, which is usually very much admired and celebrated in the Heathen poets.

NEED we to look out for any more beauties in this passage? There is still one behind, and that so particular to the Hebrew, and the languages derived from it, that it is scarce possible to transcribe it into any other. For the verb *bitbvolet* is here put in the hypocritical conjugation, (as one may term it) I mean, the *Hitbpayel*; one common use whereof is to denote a thing *feigned* or pretended to be done ‥. So that David here plainly intimates, that should he venture to join with these Heathens in their abominable superstitions, what in them might be only blindness and ignorance, would in him be gross hypocrisy.

To all which he adds, *And let me not eat of their dainties*. That is, *Let me not be allured by the plenty or delicacies of a luxurious table, (though at the same time I must be beholden to them for my bread) to mix in their religious feasts*.

THIS is most probably the meaning. And one great temptation to idolatry is here specified, *viz.*

† It is impossible indeed to give any other proof for this, than by appealing to a good ear.

‥ Thus where Amnon feigns himself sick, (2 Sam. xiii. 6.) the Hebrew expresses it by one word, the *Hitbpabel* of *chalab*, to be sick. And Amnon lay down, *va-jitbchal*. So Joab to the woman of Tekoah (2 Sam. xiv. 2.) *bitbabbeli na*, feign thyself now to be a mourner. And David (1 Sam. xxi. 13.) *jitbbolel*, feigned himself mad.

The

The pomp and pleasure of their religious festivals†, where they sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

HITHERTO we have met with little difficulty; but the next verse is very obscure, and has tortured the commentators much. And yet the mention of the *Shemen rosh*, ointment of the head, might (one would think) have led an attentive reader to a very good sense of the whole passage.

FOR what can we think David could possibly mean, by saying that the ointment of his head should not break his head, but only this; that though his anointing and designation to the throne might provoke Saul for ever to persecute him, yet he firmly relied on the divine mercy and faithfulness, that it should not bring him to destruction.

THIS, we may suppose, his friends and followers were every now and then endeavouring to alarm him with the fear of. And it is certain they had none of those scruples of piety and duty which their master had; as if the taking the life of Saul, though in his own defence, were a crime inexpressible. Abishai (1 Sam. xxvi.) begs that he might be only suffered to smite him once, and he promises not to repeat the blow: and no doubt but they would urge, amongst other arguments, to David, his unction to the throne, and God's rejecting Saul, as a thing that might warrant the lawfulness of destroying him, especially when engaged in a persecution so unjust. But David was convin-

† The jollity of these feasts is finely described by Pindar in a few words, where he speaks of the honours paid to Vesta at Tenedos. Ode 11. Nem.

Πολλὰ μὲν λουβαῖσιν ἀγαζόμενοι πρῶταν θεῶν  
Πολλὰ δὲ κῦσσα· λύρα δὲ σφιν βρέμειται καὶ αἰοιδά.  
Καὶ ξένῳ Διὸς ἀσχεῖται δίμῃς ἀνῶσις  
Ἐν τραπέζαις—

That "they performed their libations and sacrifices to her, the first of all the gods—that the lyre and song made a cheerful noise about them—And the rites of Jupiter the hospitable, were observed at tables ever spread and furnished"—all was mirth, musick, and good cheer.



ced of the contrary, and had too much tenderness and respect for Saul, to cut him off untimely, as well as too firm a trust in God's promise, not to wait his leisure.

THIS difference of sentiment in his followers and himself he here characterises by the use of two different words צַדִּיק (*tzaddik*) and חֶסֶד (*chesed*) צַדִּיק חֶסֶד יְהוֹלֵם *jebelmeni tzaddik chesed*. Let the righteous (*tzaddik*, the man of strict justice,) be still teasing and upbraiding me with my piety or goodness, *chesed*.

I TRANSLATE the word *jebelmeni*, be still teasing or upbraiding me, for want of an English word that would more exactly answer to the Hebrew.

THE Verb חָבַל *halem*, properly signifies *tundere*, *contundere*, to strike or beat as upon an anvil. So *bolem payam*, is one that strikes the anvil, *Isai. xli. 7*. And *halmuth*, a noun derived from this verb, signifies a *hammer*, *Jud. v. 26*. Some therefore translate the words *jebelmeni tzaddik chesed*, *percutiat me justus in misericordia*. Others, as the Chaldee paraphrast, *verberabat me justus propter misericordiam*. Most interpreters supposing a preposition wanting before *chesed*\*, and understanding the verb in a translated sense, to strike or beat, that is, to reprove.

I WOULD chuse to render the words in Latin, *obtundat me justus de misericordia, vel pietate mea*†. Meaning it in the same sense, wherein Terence (an author greatly admired for the purity of his style,) always

\* Bishop Hare reads *be-chesed*; and says the measure of the verse requires another syllable. If so, we may as well read *yal chesed*, if a preposition be at all necessary.

† The word חֶסֶד *chesed*, says one of the lexicographers, some interpret *εὐσυνεία τῷ ἀγαθῷ*, an excess of goodness, or more than they were strictly obliged to by the law. Another explains it, *excessus boni in non promeritum*, goodness to the undeserving. It is likewise often used for the piety due to parents, or other relations. The *stork*, which, according to the naturalists, feeds her parents when they grow old, is called, in this expressive language, *chafida*, the pious bird. Our English word *stork*, sounds much the same, if we suppose it derived from the Greek *στορν*. David's piety toward Saul therefore, and his goodness to one that deserved so little, is very aptly signified by this word *chesed*.

uses the word *obtundere*, viz. for repeating the same thing over and over in discourse till it becomes troublesome and painful to the hearers. *Ne me obtundas de hac re sæpius*, says the gentle Micio to his forward brother, "Don't for ever din my ears with the same tedious subject. *Adelpb. Ac. 1. Sc. 2. Obtundere* (says the accurate Donatus in his commentary upon Terence) *est sæpe repetendo dicere* \*, &c. "is, often to repeat the same thing in discourse; a metaphor (says he) borrowed from the Smiths, who repeat their strokes upon the iron with a hammer, till they have beat it quite flat."

I was the more solicitous to fix the meaning of this word, because I think it gives a very apt and elegant turn to the sentence. *Jebelmani tzadick chesed*, "Let my friends and followers, those advocates for strict justice, (as they think themselves) be still teasing or upbraiding me with my excessive piety and goodness, in sparing the life of Saul, my most unjust and implacable enemy."

It follows, *we-jocicbeni shemen rosh, et arguat me unguentum capitis*, "and let the ointment of my head be urged against me." There is no difficulty in this, and I have given the sense above.

THE only objection is, that there is a point or accent, called *Rebbiah*, set after *jocicbeni*. But the learned, I think, regard these accents very little. Beside that this mark does not always distinguish one part of a sentence from another † However, should we

\* So Terence himself explains it in another place, *Obe jam desine Deos, uxor, gratulando obtundere*, &c.. "Enough, wife, (says the old man) give over deafning the gods with your thanks, unless you believe them to be as dull as yourself, not to understand a thing except it be repeated to them an hundred times over—*nisi idem dictum sit centies*." *Heaut. Ac. 5. Sc. 1. v. 6.*

Supposing there be no other example in the Bible of the verb *balam* used exactly in the sense wherein Terence uses the word *obtundo*, yet this, I conceive, would be no objection, but that a metaphor so easy and natural may be here admitted, if the sense require it.

† See Buxtorf's *Thesaur. Gram.* p. 605. where there is a *Rebbiah* *nihil distinguens*, as well as a *Rebbiah* *subdistinguens*.



distinguish it thus, " Let the just man persist in upbraiding me with my goodness, and reprove me: The ointment of my head shall not break my head," &c. It will not alter the sense much, though the other distribution of the sentence seems better.

WHAT follows, viz. *ci vod for hitherto*—I suppose to be elliptical; the *vau* before *tepillatbi*, *u-tepillatbi* *be-ra'otke-hem*, yea my prayer, or, also my prayer against their wickednesses, plainly shewing something wanting to fill out the sense. As thus, *For hitherto it has not done it; and yet my prayer is all that I have opposed against their wicked attempts.*

AND this very naturally introduces the next two verses, where the mild and dutiful behaviour of David towards Saul, and the other's cruelty towards him and his friends, are set together by way of contrast in the strongest light, from the instances of each sort here produced.

THE first is David's humanity towards Saul, in giving him his life at two several times, when he had it in his power to destroy him as he pleased. Ver. 6. *Their judges have been dismissed in the rocky places; and have heard my words that they were sweet:* That is,

Their princes have been dismissed in safety, when I had them at an advantage in those rocky deserts: and only heard me expostulate with them in the gentlest words.

THE other is, Saul's barbarity and cruelty towards David, (or his friends, which is much the same) in the horrid massacre of Ahimelec and the priests, by the hand of Doeg the Edomite, done in such a savage manner, that he compares it to the chopping and cleaving wood, ver. 7. *Like as when one cutteth and cleaveth, so have our bones been scattered on the earth at the command of Saul.* For so I read the Hebrew words, viz. *לִפִּי שָׂאוּל*, *le-pi Saul*.

STRANGE work has been made with the former of these verses, *Their judges have been dismissed*, &c. Some rendering the verb, instead of *dimittere* to dismiss, by *demittere*, or *dejacere*, to throw down: and

more-

moreover, changing the tense from the *præterit* to the *future*; instead of *nishmetu*, reading it *jishmetu*. But with what authority they alter the text, or what good sense can be extracted from it by this means, I know not.

THE verb *sham*, *shamat*, signifies so properly to *dismiss*, *release*, or *set free*; that the sabbatical year wherein debts and servants were released, as also their grounds were freed from tillage, is called for this reason, by a noun derived from this verb *shenath. hassemittab* \*, the Year of Shemittab, or release. And one example of this kind, drawn from a law or custom particularly described, is worth a thousand, to shew the genuine sense of any word †.

AND if we understand *neshmetu* in this its proper signification, the history itself will easily make out the other parts of the interpretation.

SHOULD we suppose this passage to refer to the first time of David's sparing Saul, viz. when he had him in his power in the cave of Engeddi, (here called *jede jelay*, the sides of the rock, or the rocky places) the speech he made on this occasion when he called after Saul, (and which is recorded 1 Sam. xxiv. from the 8th to 16th verse) might well be called *sweet or pleasant words*. For they set his own innocence and the king's unjust behaviour to him in so strong a light, and with all that gentleness and mildness, that even this hard-hearted prince could not forbear being greatly affected with it for the present; and we are told,

\* Deut. xv. 9. Ch. xxxi. 10.

† The verb is plainly used in this sense, Exod. xxiii. 10. Six years thou shalt sow thy land, and gather in the fruits thereof, *ve-hashbeiyith tishmet-ennab*, and in the seventh thou shalt let it go. See also Deut. xv. 1, 2, 3. where *nagash* and *shamat*, to exact a debt, and to remit or release it, are opposed. Jerem. xvii. 4. The Jews are threatened to be released or dismissed from the land of their inheritance in this phrase, *ve-shamattab u-bea min-nachalatbca*, et *dismissio erit etiam tibi ab hereditate tua*, alluding to the year of Shemittab, which (as appears from Jer. xxxiv 8, &c.) they had for a long time neglected to observe. And thou also shalt be dismissed from thine heritage which I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in a land which thou knowest not.

(ver.



(ver. 16, 17.) that *he lift up his voice and wept.* And he said to David, *Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.*

IF we understand the passage to refer to the second time of David's sparing the life of Saul, told us 1 Sam. xxvi. Here again we have another speech of David's which struck his adversary with a full conviction of his guilt and folly in thus persecuting him; for which we have his own acknowledgment, ver. 21. *Then said Saul, I have sinned; return, my son David for I will no more do thee harm—Behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.*

MOREOVER in this adventure, not only the life of Saul was spared, but that of his chief captain and other military officers; for they were fast asleep about him, when David and his companions surprised them.

AND this might warrant the use of *shopbetim*, *judges*, in the plural, supposing the strictness of grammar should be here insisted on. Though it may be understood of Saul alone; and that by no very uncommon figure of speech\*.

\* So *Æschylus*, *Prometh. vinc.* v. 149. Νῆσι γὰρ οἰακὸρμος κρατοῦσ' Ὀλύμπου—ἦτοι ὁ Ζεὺς, says the *Scholion*—And so v. 438. Σοῖσι τοῖς νῆσι τούτοις, meaning Jupiter alone.

We have a remarkable example of this kind, 1 Sam. xxiv. 4. *And the men of David said unto him, behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine enemy* (the Hebrew is אֹיִבֶיךָ, thine enemies) *into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.*

By the way, the commentators are at a loss where to find this oracle. Bishop Patrick thinks it was an inference drawn by David's men from Samuel's denunciation against Saul. But perhaps we need not go so far back for it: for in the foregoing chapter we have an account of David's consulting God, whether he should go against the Philistines to Keilah; and upon his second consultation, the answer is, *Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand*, (1 Sam. xxiii. 4.) The very same words which are repeated by David's men to him, (Ch. xxiv. 4.) only *Pelishtim* changed into *Ojebea*, *Philistines* into thy *enemies* in general. And probably they might be fond of extending the oracle further than the express words of it, in favour of their master; or might easily, by a slip of memory, change *Philistines* into *enemies*, as they were always and eminently such to them.

As

As to his using the word *shopbet*, judge, rather than king or prince, there seems to be a peculiar elegance in it, as he was just about to mention that inhuman sentence of Saul's executed upon Ahimelec and the priests of Nob, by the hand of Doeg the Edomite; for to this I suppose the next verse to refer. So that it is as if he had said, *Even those cruel judges who have destroyed my friends and favourers without mercy have been dismissed by me in safety—*

It follows, *And have heard my words that they were sweet*—that is, have only heard me expostulate with them in the mildest and the gentlest manner. And here again we may observe an elegant opposition betwixt the words of David, which he calls sweet or pleasant; and *pi Saul, the command of Saul*, or the cruel sentence pronounced by him, and mentioned in the following verse.

For that the words (ver. 7.) have relation to this piece of history, is so clear to me, that I cannot see how it is possible to apply them to any other.

WE learn from the first of Sam. xxii. that upon the information of Doeg the Edomite, that Ahimelec had relieved David in his distress with the shew-bread and Goliath's sword, the king sent and called Ahimelec before him with all his father's house, the Priests that were in Nob\* and commanded them to be slain upon the spot; that his own servants disobeyed him from a principle of religion, and would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord†, who at the same time that they bore a sacred character were entirely innocent; but that Doeg the Edomite made no scruple to execute the orders of this cruel prince; and no less than eighty-five persons were hewed in pieces before Saul's face, by Doeg, and (I suppose) his Edomite Attendants.

SUCH havock as this might well be compared to the chopping and cleaving of wood, as our tran-

\* 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

† Ver. 17.



station gives the sense; though wood is not in the original, but only as *one that cuts and cleaves*.

WHETHER the word *ba-aretz*, *in*, or *upon the earth*, be joined with the former or the latter part of the sentence, (as it may be joined to either) makes no material difference, for the same image will be still preserved, *viz.* that of mangled bones and limbs scattered here and there upon the ground, as the chips fly off from a piece of wood at the repeated stroke of the axe, and lie all about scattered and confused.

BUT thus much for these two or three verses, which, for want of the right key, have appeared so difficult to commentators. The remaining part will require less labour to dispatch it.

WHEN we reflect upon this surprising generosity of David towards Saul, his cruel and implacable enemy, it naturally excites our curiosity to know the principle upon which he acted. For it is presumed that all men act from some principle or another; and a conduct so extraordinary must needs have some extraordinary basis for its support: I mean some fixed religious principle, that could enable him to surmount all difficulties.

Now this we have discovered to us in the following verse; and it is the noblest and simplest that can be imagined, *viz.* a firm trust in God, as the great Lord and Ruler of the world; and a steady resolution to obey him in all his commands. *For mine eyes are unto thee, Jehovah my Lord; in thee have I trusted.* \*—

AMONGST the odd sayings of Pythagoras this was one, *Ἀπλῶς σεαυτὸν, simply thyself* †. That is, Reduce thy

\* Psalm cxli. 8.

† This thought of Pythagoras is expressed (I think) by David, Ps. lxxxvi. 11. but more intelligibly, and in a manner infinitely more affecting, as he makes it the subject of his prayer to God. *Jached lebab-i le jireab shem-eca, make my heart one, to fear thy name.* That is, Let the fear of thee be the one ruling disposition of my soul—in opposition to the double-minded man, who has a heart and a heart (as the Hebrew elegantly expresses it) one that draws him this way, and another that way.

conduct, if possible, to one single aim, and pursue it without weariness or distraction.

If this single aim be to approve ourselves to God by such a course of life as he prescribes; to adhere strictly to our duty with an eye to him who has commanded it, and patiently submit the issue of things to his all-wise and gracious providence; we have then hit upon that principle, which here appears to have animated David; and may with confidence address our prayers to the great Lord and Sovereign of the world in all our straits and difficulties, as he does, in the following part of the psalm—*In thee have I trusted; al teyar napshi, make not my soul naked*; that is, Suffer it not to become naked and exposed to the assaults and machinations of my enemies. For, in the language of holy Scripture, God is often said to do what he permits, or suffers to be done.

BUT whether David here prays to have his life preserved from danger, or his soul from sin, may admit a question. The words will suit with either explication, and probably he might intend both, but chiefly the latter. We have seen from verse 4. of this psalm, *Incline not my heart, &c.* how earnestly he begs that God would protect him by his grace from complying with the idolatrous practices of the Heathen, to whom he was about to fly for refuge. And it is remarkable, that in his last speech to Saul, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19,—) where he mentions the wicked policy of his Enemies, Saul's evil counsellors who had contrived to force him into banishment, he takes no notice of the hazard to which his life would be exposed thereby, but only of the danger to his religion, that is, his soul. *Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king bear the words of his servant: If the Lord hath stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering*; that is, if any threatening denounced by God against thee of rending the kingdom from thee, and giving it to another, (see 1 Sam. xv. 28.) be the cause that hath stirred thee up against me, endea-



your to appease him by an offering that shall testify thy sincere repentance, and perhaps God may reverse the sentence he hath passed against thee: *But if they be thy evil counsellors, the children of men* (as he proceeds) *cursted (are), they \* before the Lord; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go serve other Gods.* As if he had said, They have done what lies in their power to drive me to idolatry, by forcing me into a country where I shall have the strongest temptations to it.

THIS was a thing, in short, he seems to have dreaded more than death. And therefore he again prays against it, verse 9 of this psalm.

*Preserve me from the trap they have laid for me; and from the snares of the workers of iniquity.*

If Saul and his evil counsellors be meant in the former clause, there is no doubt but the Heathen, to whom he was now driven for refuge, must be understood in the latter. They are here characterised, as in verse the 4th, by the appellation, *pe-bale arwen, workers of iniquity or idolatry*: and the idols of the Heathen were always snares to the Israelites, as their history informs us, and as they are forewarned by God himself, Jud. ii. 3.—*Their Gods will be a snare unto you, jibju lacem le-mokesb,* the very same word, as here.

THE last verse may be considered either as a petition, *Let the wicked fall, &c.* or rather, as an expression of his hope and assurance, *The wicked shall fall into their own nets together, and I shall still escape.*

THE frequent use of the future for the imperative, is what creates this ambiguity in the Hebrew. I chuse to understand it in the sense which is most obvious, viz. the future here used as a future, and as expressing a pious hope and trust in the divine mercy, that his prayer should be graciously

\* Our translation, *cursted be they, &c.* but the Hebrew is only *curst be they.*

heard

heard and answered. And this the rather, because we find from the sequel of the history, that his prayer was answered to the full; and that he escaped all the snares that were laid for him by his enemies on every side, in a manner very remarkable and providential.

AND now after so large a comment on the text, I would refer the reader, if he please, back to the paraphrase again, where I have endeavoured to collect these scattered lights, and to set before him in one view, and in their natural order, the several sentiments expressed in this psalm. Though I am aware how far short a paraphrase must fall of the strength and beauty of the original; for light and heat diffused will be evermore lessened in proportion. But I had no other way to shew the easy transitions from one thing to another, and the just scope and connection of the whole, but by enlarging it in the manner I have done. And I hope both the translation and paraphrase are by this time fully cleared and justified.

I SHOULD here have closed this section, but for the following remark, which occurred to me in reading *The historical Account of the Life of David*. Where the learned author, who has so well vindicated the character and conduct of his hero in other respects, appears at a loss how to apologize for this part of his behaviour, his flying to Achish king of Gath, an Heathen and an enemy to his country. Or rather, though he allows that an innocent person, as David was, might be justified in such a step from the necessity of the thing, yet he seems to think him inexcusable for taking such a resolution without consulting God either by his priest or prophet, before he fixed upon it; and to this purpose has the following paragraph, which I could not pass by without notice.

“JOSEPHUS (says he) tells us, that he advised with his friends on this occasion; but “no writer informs us, that he advised with God.



“And I am afraid this is too often the case  
 “of the best men, (I beg the unserious reader’s  
 “pardon for the reflection) to advise with their  
 “friends, and with their own hearts, and leave  
 “God out of their consultations, by neglecting to  
 “implore his aid and direction”\*.

I PERSUADE myself, the candid author will not be displeased, to find that this reflection here was altogether needless. Whether David consulted God in a publick manner by his priest or prophet, or whether, in this exigency, he had the opportunity of doing it, are points about which, the Scripture being silent, we can form no judgment with certainty. But that he did not neglect to implore the divine aid and direction by a private address to the great Lord and Ruler of the world, appears evident (I think) beyond dispute from this psalm. And had this gentleman given us more of those divine hymns, and explained them more at large, in the course of his history, they would, in my humble opinion, have added no small grace and ornament to it, and at the same time been the most unanswerable vouchers for his hero’s character.

ONE of the greatest beauties in Homer are the speeches of his illustrious personages, and especially their soliloquies; where the very inmost workings of the soul are laid open to our view. The finest panegyrick cannot give us half the satisfaction, much less convey so just and lively an impression of the character, as it does to hear a brave man speak *πρὸς ὃν μεγάλιστον δύνει*. The other is at best a picture, but here we have the original.

THE prayers of a good man are undoubtedly of this nature. And if ever he discloses his most secret thoughts, or the real frame and temper of his heart, it is in his devout retirements, where he opens and unbosoms himself before his Maker.

AND what an assemblage of the most substantial virtues discover themselves to us in this short prayer

or soliloquy of David's? His faith and trust in God; his duty to his prince; his abhorrence of idolatry; his strict adherence to what was right and just, against all the persuasions of his friends, and all the provocation of his enemies; a magnanimity that shewed itself in the article of danger and distress; attended with a hope the offspring of religion, and not the less heroic for being inspired.

HORACE has given us a very celebrated description 'a resolutely good man, whom neither the clamours of the people demanding what was wrong, nor the frowns of a tyrant threatening death, could shake from his solid purpose.' But take it in his own more expressive words—

*Iustum, & tenacem propositi virum,*

*Non civium ardor prava jubentium,*

*Non vultus instantis tyranni*

*Mente quatit solida, &c.*

Lib. 3. Od. 3.

THE image (to be sure) is beautiful—But nevertheless it is an image without life, compared with that which rises to our view in this psalm. For in the description given us by the Latin poet, though we take the whole of it together, we see nothing of that vital principle which should animate a conduct so heroic, and which shines out so distinguishably in that of the psalmist: I mean, that sublime regard to him, whose will alone it is that gives the sanction to what is right and just; and under whose supreme direction all rational creatures ought to square their resolutions and behaviour.

OUR polite gentlemen may admire the Heathen poets, if they please: I admire them, too, and pity them. But I hope in God, I shall never be delivered over to so depraved a taste, as to think an ode of Horace, or any other Heathen poet, comparable for justness and nobleness of sentiments to this short psalm of David's, or to others I could mention. The superiority must needs appear, if there be any thing high



and amiable in truth and virtue; any meanness or deformity in vice and error.

To recover these sacred hymns from that obscurity wherein they seem involved at present, and restore them to their due lustre; were an undertaking highly worthy of some happy genius placed by providence in our famous seats of learning, where they abound in leisure, and every other advantage requisite to this purpose.

## S E C T. VIII.

**T**O have a right apprehension of words or names, (says the philosopher \*) is a good step to the knowledge of things. It must be so, in every language, in proportion as the names of things express their qualities; a property no where to be found in such perfection as in the Hebrew.

By fixing the meaning שְׁאוֹל, (*Sheôl*) therefore, I have shewn plainly, that the ancients under the *Old Testament* believed the existence of the soul after death in a certain place and state.

I SHALL now proceed a step farther, and endeavour to shew, in the same unexceptionable way of proof, that they believed the souls of men to be there distributed into two different classes or societies, as they were either good or bad.

AND to this purpose I must observe, that in the *Old Testament*, we not only find the word *Sheôl* used in a large and general sense, for the common receptacle of souls, but in a more restrained one, *Sheôl tachthith*, *Sheôl tachtiya*, the lower or inferior *Sheôl*: which of necessity implies that there was likewise a superior one, as every *relatum* infers its correlate. And that this lower *Sheôl* was held to be the place destined to bad souls, seems clear, from the several passages of Scripture, where the word occurs.

\* Plato in *Cratylus*—Ὅτι αἱ τὰ ὀνόματα ἰδίᾳ, ἡσυχίᾳ καὶ τὰ ἀσάφιστα.

THUS Moses (Deut xxxii. 22.) describing the justice of God in all its terrors, uses this expression, *A fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn unto the lowest Sheól.*

AND when David uses a like expression, (Ps. lxxxvi. 13.) *For great is thy mercy towards me, and thou hast delivered my soul ni-Sheól tachtiya, from the lower Sheól;* it is reasonable to think he meant it of the mercy God had shewn him in not cutting him off in his sins, and assigning him his place and portion with the wicked souls in the separate state: for if a deliverance from death were all that he intended, *Sheól* had been sufficient without the epithet annexed. But it is very observable, that David, throughout this whole psalm, chiefly celebrates God for his attributes of mercy and placability. *Ci attā Jehova tob ve-sallach—quia tu, Domine, bonus & propitiabilis, &c.* ver. 5. The whole psalm, in short, seems to be the language of a sincere penitent, who has experienced the divine mercy in the forgiveness of his Sins, and in whose thoughts therefore the remembrance of it will always sit uppermost. And to such an one a deliverance from death, barely considered, could not be half so affecting, as to be delivered from that which must have been the consequence if he had died in his sins, the *Sheól tachtiya*.

WE meet with several other texts of Scripture to the same purpose. Thus Prov. xv. 24. *The way of life is above to the wise, to depart from Sheól beneath.* What can be Solomon's meaning here? That any man's wisdom should exempt him from death? No certainly, he knew that *wise men die as well as the fool and the brutish person*, Ps. xlix. 10. And that *none can deliver his soul (mijad Sheól) from the hand of Sheól*, Ps. xxxix. 48. But from the lower *Sheól*, he may, if he is wise, and will but be persuaded to look upward. *For the way of life is above to the wise.*

So again, Prov. ix. 18. The wise man, to deter the heedless youth from the harlot's house, tells him, that the dead (Heb. הַרְפָּאִים *the repbaim*) are there, and  
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and amiable in truth and virtue; any meanness or deformity in vice and error.

To recover these sacred hymns from that obscurity wherein they seem involved at present, and restore them to their due lustre; were an undertaking highly worthy of some happy genius placed by providence in our famous seats of learning, where they abound in leisure, and every other advantage requisite to this purpose.

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her guests are in the depths of *Sheôl*, that is, in the lowermost and wretched part of it.

For this was properly the place of the *rephaim*; the word originally denoting those giants in impiety, that were overwhelmed by the flood; and from thence it came afterwards to signify the *manes* of wicked men, or men of violence like them, who, as they died, were gathered to their assembly. Of this we have a remarkable proof, Job xxvi. 5. *Ha-rephaim jecholelu nit-tacbat maim ve-shocenehem*, or *shicnehem*? Shall the *rephaim* be brought forth from under the waters, and their inhabitants—or their neighbours? It follows, *Sheôl is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering*. They are the words of Job, where he is giving instances of the almighty power of God.

Our translators, here indeed, a little unhappily, *Dead things are formed from under the waters, and their inhabitants*. But *rephaim* never signifies dead things; but always giants, or the ghosts of dead men; of mighty wicked men.

THE Chaldee paraphrast, Septuagint and Latin Vulgate, all translate *rephaim* here by a word that signifies giants: And as the verb *cholel* properly denotes the pains and throws of childbirth; the *Latin Vulgate* renders it, *Ecce gigantes gemunt, &c. Lo the giants groan beneath the waters, &c.* The *Septuagint* interrogatively *μή γίγαντες γένοντο ὑποταταί, Shall the giants be brought forth?* And the *Chaldee* paraphrast joining both senses, and understanding the passage likewise interrogatively, (which the  $\pi$  prefixed to *rephaim* favours) *Can the giants that tremble be born again, since they and their host are under the waters?* The Hebrew word, which he renders *exercitus eorum, their host*, is  $\text{שׁוֹנֵיָהֶם}$ , which, according as it is differently pointed, signifies their inhabitants, or their neighbours.

The meaning therefore seems to be this: Shall the *rephaim* be brought forth again from under the waters with which they were overwhelmed at the flood? Or their neighbours, those wicked souls that have been since gathered to their assembly?

Le Clerc (who was very conversant with the Hea-then poets, and gives us very apt quotations from them ; but if he had a genius for poetry himself, does not shew much of it, I think, in his interpretation of the poetical books of Scripture) translates the passage thus. *Mortui commoventur sub aqua, & hujus incolæ.* The dead are moved under the water, and (so are) its inhabitants. And adds, in contempt of all the old translations, What have we to do with the fabulous Giants thrown into *Tartarus* by the poets? (It seems this learned commentator had no notion of the true origin of the Heathen fables.) ‘ We translate *rephaim* therefore, (says he) *mortuos*, the dead; and understand by it, drowned men, who cannot escape the eye of God, and are put in motion by him, if it so please him. And since *cholel* signifies to endure the pains of childbirth, and in that signification cannot agree to the dead, we have turned it *commoventur*, are moved; which, nevertheless, is not to be understood of the resurrection of the dead, a point unknown to Job, but of any other change which God is able to make in them; as, suppose, casting their dead carcases to the shore’ †.

HERE then, we see, he reduces some grand thing evidently designed by Job, to a poor nothing, a dead carcase of a drowned person thrown upon the shore. The *hujus incolæ* that follows (its inhabitants) he explains of the fishes, which is descending lower still. And to compleat the image, he interprets the next verse, *viz. Sheôl is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering*; the former of the grave, or

\* Sed nihil nobis negotii cum fabulosis gigantibus, qui a poetis dicuntur in Tartara præcipites dari. Le Clerc in loc.

† Mortuos ergo vertimus, intelligimusque homines submersos, qui Deum omnia pervadentem & videntem non fugiunt & commoventur, si ita ei libeat. Cum vero מולד signifies pati dolores partus nec tamen ea significatio conveniat mortuis, vertimus commoventur. Quod tamen intelligendum non est de resurrectione mortuorum, quam ignorabat Jobus; sed de quavis alia mutatione quam in iis facere potest Deus; ut si, e fundo maris, ad littora ejiciantur corpora. Le Cl. ibid.



some other subterraneous place, not the seat of souls \*, says he; (no, take care of that;) and the latter, of the place where dead carcases rot and putrify †.

AND yet, what is strange, he tells us, that Job in this chapter shews, that he can speak more sublimely of the majesty of God, than Bildad ‡. If so, I am sure he requires another sort of an interpreter than Mons. Le Clerc: for what sublimity can there be in this, becoming the majesty of God? that drowned men and fishes are moved, or thrown upon the shore by him: and that *Sbeöl* and *Abaddon*; that is, the sepulchres of men, and the place of other putrified carcases are naked before him. *Wonderful!*

SINCE I am got among the commentators, I shall trespass a little longer on the reader's patience, to present him with the conceit of another famous writer in that way, though of a different cast, I mean the jesuit Pineda, upon this text: who, after several folio pages, to let us know what terrible things giants are, by how many names they are called in Scripture, and that there really have been such monsters of men, gives us his opinion in the conclusion, (with the air of one who was too modest (poor man!) to affect a superiority over all the other interpreters, and yet could not forbear proposing his || *nostrum*) that by

\* *Hæc tantum diximus, ut moneremus nos vocæ inferi* (So he translates *sbeöl* here) *intelligere quod latet sub terræ superficie, sive sint sepulchra, sive alia profundiora loca; non sedem animarum, sive felicitum sive damnatorum.* Le Clerc in Job. xxvi. 6.

† *Locus in quo pereunt animalia*—aut locus, in quem cadavera eorum qui perierunt longa die, aut putredine conspicienda deponuntur. Ibid.

‡ *Ceterum hoc capite ostendit Jobus se sublimius loqui posse de magnitudine Dei, quam Bildadum.* Ibid.

|| Pineda in loc. tom. ii. p. 288. Col. 1. *Sed age tu, cui nulla hujus loci interpretatio omnino placet, profero aliam meliorem.* (This supposed as spoken to himself; to which he replies.) *Minime vero, neque enim tam temerarius sum, ut unus ipse mihi in ulla re placere aut velim, aut honestum tutumve existimem. Sed tamen in re prædifficili, secundum alios interpretes, quid mihi verosimile videatur, proponam; judicium & probatio esto penes cordatum lectorem.*

giants

giants Job meant giant-like fishes, such as whales; and by their neighbours or cohabitants, a little fish called the *Musculus* by Pliny, and of the make and size of a gudgeon according to Plutarch; who gives it the name of *ηγούμεν*, or *the leader*, from its office, as being the whale's constant guide to go before him, directing him to avoid the muds and shallows. *Quis hic non videat* (says he) *mirabiles vicinos, proximosque gigantum adhabitatores.*

Would you believe that one, who shews so little judgment here, should look down with contempt on all the protestant commentators that come in his way? But what may not a man of learning and of reading dare, be his candour or his sense as little as you please.

Of all the commentators upon the Scriptures that I have seen, the Jesuits are the most voluminous; and of these none more so than this author, who has amassed together such a heap of learning, (if much reading may be called so) and throws it out with such a profusion, upon every little occasion, that one would think he had made collections from the common place books of his whole society. Nevertheless, if you desire to see a judicious commentary on the Scriptures, that shall explain and set them in their proper light, you must look for it elsewhere. Clearing up the sacred text is not their business; but puzzling and perplexing it is very much so. And there are two considerable points they gain by being thus voluminous; to have themselves admired for a shew of learning, and the holy Scripture, (their most formidable and irreconcilable enemy) contemned for its obscurity.

BUT surely, if there be any truth in the old saying, *μῦθα ἑξήκισσι, &c.* that *a great book is a great evil*; a bulky rambling commentary on the Scriptures is eminently such.

THIS commentator, in the dedication of his work to the general of their order Aquaviva (taking occasion from the name of his patron to metaphorize his style



style to such a degree, that it surpasses my little skill to translate it) says—*Capitis nimirum atque fontis est ipsa rivulorum aqua. At quam multa hoc felicissimo tue gubernationis tempore scriptorum flumina, ex abditis disciplinarum omnium fontibus orta, & quasi ab ipso capite societatis accersita & ducta, uberrimis aquis redundantia, per omnes terrarum oras simul hereticorum moles oppositas obruerunt, simul pietatis hortos ubertim irrigarunt? Uberem dico variae & exquisitae doctrinae librorum copiam, quos per hosce annos, non jam clausis, sed apertis ostiis, minime stagnantibus, sed vivis aquis, erumpentibus quoque longo intervallo compressis, tua societas effudit.*

THE substance is, 'That this famous society, under the government of their head with a lucky name, had poured out such a deluge of books new and old, that they had at once overturned all the dams and moles opposed to them by the hereticks, and plentifully watered their own gardens, where alone (to be sure) that plant called piety can grow.'

BUT deluges of books, like those of rivers, I believe, are seldom seen to run fine. And though, perhaps, this learned commentator for knowledge and abilities deserves to be placed in the first rank of the writers of his order, that overflowed in such abundance in those times; yet when I consider his manner of treating the holy Scriptures, I can think of nothing fitter to compare him with, than his own giant-like fish, but without the *Musculus* to guide him; or such an unweildy animal as the prophet Ezekiel has described to us, (Chap. xxxii. 2.) that *cometh forth into the rivers, and troubleth the waters with his feet, and fouleth the rivers.*

BUT to return from this digression.

IT is easy to confirm the interpretation I have given of this text of Job, by comparing it with other places of Scripture, where the word *rephaim* is used in the same sense.

THUS Solomon says, (Prov. xxi. 16.) *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding, (that is, deviates from the paths of religion) shall remain bi-*

*kehal*

*kehal rephaim*, in the congregation of the *rephaim*, his lot shall be amongst those wicked souls hereafter: that is, in the depths of *Sheól*, or the lowermost and wretched part of it; where the lewd and dissolute go, as he had told us, chap. ix. 18.

AND thus, when the prophet Isaiah, in the passage formerly cited, (Is. xiv. 9.) stirreth up the *rephaim* to meet the king of Babylon at his coming; he meant, no doubt, the souls of mighty men, wicked and impious, like himself.

FOR, I think, the word is always used in a bad sense throughout the Scriptures: and the not attending to this hath created some mistakes or inaccuracies in our translation. As, particularly, Is. xxvi. 19: *And the earth shall cast out the dead*——Not the dead in general, though the prophet is there speaking of a resurrection; but the wretched part of them, the *rephaim*, as the word there is. *Thy dead (men) shall live; (together with) my dead body shall they arise: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, va-aretz rephaim tappil*; literally, and the earth shall make to fall the *rephaim*, that is, shall cast them forth as an abortive birth.

FOR thus *nephele*, a noun derived from this verb, signifies wherever it occurs; as Ps. lviii. 8. *Let them be like the untimely fruit of a woman (nephele eseth) and let them not see the sun.* And so Job. iii. 16. Eccles. vi. 3. And therefore the *hiphil* of the verb may very naturally signify to make to fall as an abortive\*.

AND can any thing be more apt or elegant than the opposition or contrast arising hence, betwixt this and the foregoing clause of the sentence? That while

\* In this sense it is used by the Talmudists and Rabbins, as well as in the oldest *Targum*, that of Jonathan; as Buxtorff tells us in his *Lexic. Rabbin. & Talmud*, on the word *לד*, Col. 1367. *Apud Rabbinos & Talmudicos, לד abortire: unde in targ. Jonath. ve-appilath jath yubera, & abjecit (id est, abortiuit) embryonem, factum, Exod. xxiv. 10.*

So *לד*, *mappellath*, is often used by the Talmudists *pro femina abortiente*, says Dr. Lightfoot, *Hore Abb.* in 1 Cor. xv. 8.



God's people should rise out of the dust, like a plant or vegetable, quickened by the dew of heaven, and full of life and vigour; the earth should cast forth the *rephaim* as an abortion only to perish or sink deeper in destruction.

THIS sense will appear still more probable, if we compare it with the foregoing verse, to which this is an answer. The people are there represented as complaining of their own afflictions and vain efforts for deliverance, and the prosperity of their idolatrous oppressors, in such strains as these. *Like as a woman with child—We have been in pain, we have as it were, brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither are the inhabitants of the world fallen, (jippelu) verse 18.*

To obviate these complaints, they are put in mind, that there should come a time hereafter, when they, who were thus afflicted now, should rise to happiness, if they still adhered to God and to their duty: And the inhabitants of the world, (as they called them) or the impious race of men should be cast forth to perish with the *rephaim*, which would be a dreadful fall or miscarriage indeed.

It is easy to observe a correspondency in the phrase, though it must be owned, that there is something difficult in the construction of this verse; which is no wonder, since the whole chapter is a piece of poetry, and that of the boldest sort; a song or ode.—A prophetic ode.—And therefore we may expect to find the phrase obscure, and the sentences abrupt, as here.—*Methe-ca-jickju nebalatb-i jekumun—Thy dead shall live; my dead body (singular) shall rise, (the verb plural) which may be thus supplied, supposing them the words of God by his prophet, Thy dead, O my people, shall live; Neballatb-i, (the preposition *vim* understood) with my dead body shall they arise. So our translators—And thus it contains an awful mystery indeed, as pointing at him who was the first-fruits from the dead. Or נבלת may be supposed to have*

have the *Vau* omitted, (as it often happens) and so should be read נבאלתי, *neballoth-i* plural, *my dead bodies*; that is, the dead that belong to me shall rise. Awake and sing, (as it follows) ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is (as) the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the *rephaim* as an abortion.

ALL the ancient versions, though they differ somewhat in the construction of this last clause \*, yet agree to take the word *rephaim* here in a bad sense. The Chaldee paraphrast, with a little enlargement, turns it thus: But the impious, to whom, thou hast given power, and they have transgressed thy word, thou wilt deliver them over, *li-Gebinnom*, *to Gebenna*, or *Hell*.

THOUGH this may seem, at first sight, taking a great deal of liberty with the text; yet it comes nearer the true sense of the Hebrew, than any of the other versions.

*Gebinnom*, or the valley of *Hinnom*, (in the New Testament γέννα, *Gebenna*) was a word assumed before our Saviour's time, to express the place of punishment for wicked souls. And it is remarkable, that this valley was either a part of, or contiguous to, another valley, called the valley of the *rephaim*, in our translation *the valley of giants*, (Josh. xviii. 16.)

WHETHER any idolatrous worship here paid the *rephaim* might give it that name; as the sacrificing to *Moloch* in the valley of *Hinnom* is supposed to have occasioned their giving the name *Gebinnom* to *Hell*: this is certain, that the infernal *Gebinnom*, and the

\* The words, *va-aretx rephaim tappil*, may be rendered, *And thou shalt make to fall the land of the rephaim*; and most of the ancient versions follow this construction. Only the Septuagint very inaccurately, ἡ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν πικτήσεται, *the land of the impious shall fall*. But the verb does not signify to fall, but to make to fall. What creates the ambiguity is, that *tappil* is either the second singular masculine, and then it may refer to God; or the third singular feminine, and then it must refer to *aretx*. The former construction cannot take place, if the words be (as they seem to be) *the words of God*.

place



place of the *rephaim*, were always understood to mean the same.

THAT the *rephaim* were objects of the Heathen idolatry, seems not improbable; and I know not whether something of this kind be not hinted to us in the foregoing verses of this chapter; where they are again mentioned by name, though they do not appear in our translation.

ISAI. XXVI. 13. O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

14. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, (Heb. רֵפְאִים, *rephaim*) they shall not rise: therefore (or because) thou hast visited or destroyed them, and made (or thou shalt make, תַּעֲשֶׂה) all their memory to perish.

THE opposition here put betwixt *Jehova Elobemu*, *Jehova* our God, and the other lords (*adonim*) that had dominion over them, (*beyalunu*, another remarkable word; for *beyalim* was a general name for the Heathen Gods, of one sort at least:) but especially the last words, *By thee only will we make mention of thy name*; that is, thee only will we worship. All this seems to shew, that the other lords here mentioned, were no other than the idol deities of the neighbouring nations, to whose worship the Jews had but too often submitted.

AND as these were, for the most part, in reality, dead men; he proceeds to say of them in the following verse, *They are dead, they shall not live: they are rephaim* (manes or ghosts of mighty wicked men) *they shall not rise*. Therefore (or because) thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made (or thou shalt make, תַּעֲשֶׂה) all their memory to perish: that is, there shall

\* There is another sense the words will bear, if we give them a different punctuation in the Hebrew, viz. thus הֵם כִּי יָמָּם יָמָּם יָמָּם, *Meibim, bal jechayim*; *rephaim, bal jatumim*. They are dead, they shall not make to live: They are *rephaim*, they shall not arise. Therefore, &c. And so Symmachus.

come a time, when men shall no longer worship them. For *zecer*, *memory*, here exactly answers to *nazcir*, or *making mention*, in the foregoing verse.

It appears (I think) from many places of Scripture, that this sort of superstition, I mean the worship of dead men, was of an older date, and a more wide extent, than is commonly supposed.

BUT whether we understand the other lords, mentioned verse 13. of the Heathen deities, or the Heathen princes, that had tyrannized over them; the thing will be much the same to our purpose. And the opposition will be still plain betwixt the *methim* and *rephaim*, or *the impious unbelieving dead* (ver. 14.) and *God's dead*, the *metheca* and *Neballoth-i*, (ver. 19.) with respect to their condition in the *future resurrection*. Of the one it is said expressly, that *they shall not live, nor rise*; that is, they shall not rise to life: of the other, as expressly, that they shall live and rise, and rejoice \*.

I HAVE dwelt the longer, I confess, on this passage of Isaiah, as it came in my way; because it is so clear a proof of the doctrine of a resurrection, delivered by this great prophet; and that, not as a new discovery, for the phrase itself is of ancient date; as will further appear in the following section.

I SHALL only add here——That if any one be inclined to think, after all, that the prophet in this passage speaks only of a metaphorical resurrection, he may compare it with the passages of the *New Testament*, where the same doctrine is delivered; and

\* The two following verses, which conclude the chapter, *Come my people, enter into thy Chambers, &c.* are a continuation of the same subject, and an affectionate exhortation to them, to wait with hope and patience the revelation of that great day: As they were very anciently understood, and are quoted to this purpose by St. Clement bishop of Rome, in his undoubted epistle to the Corinthians; a book which, next to the holy Scriptures, is allowed to be of the most venerable authority. Chap. I. A. γίνεσθαι σάβαν, &c. The whole passage is a remarkable one, and the reader may find it cited and explained at large by the learned bishop Bull, *Serm.* Vol. I. p. 103, & seq.



Perhaps, with a very little stretch of fancy, he will think these are to be understood in a metaphorical sense likewise.

## SECT. IX.

WE have found then a place for bad souls in the intermediate state, according to the belief of the ancient Hebrews, viz. the lower *Sheol*, and the region of the *Rephaim*: a name, which, as I observed, originally denoted those giants in strength and stature as well as impiety, that were overwhelmed by the flood. It is true, they are not called by this name, Gen. vi. but *Nephilim* and *Gibborim*; and perhaps the name of *Rephaim* was not given to them till after their death.

BUT that Job speaks of them by this name in the passage I have mentioned\*, seems clear; for he supposes them still to remain under the waters, or under the abyfs, which had swallowed them up at the flood.

Buxtorf (in his *Lexicon Chald. Talm. &c.* Col. 1368.) produces an odd passage from the Talmud, thus translated by him; *Commovit (Deus) maria; & ostendit ei (Mosi) את נפילימ etb Nephilim.* 'God put the seas in motion, and shewed Moses the *Nephilim*.'

THIS learned man puzzles strangely at the word *Nephilim*, and fancies it to be some aquatic reptile; most probably from the affinity of the sound (says he) to the *Nauplium* mentioned by Pliny. He had quite forgot that the *Nephilim* were the giants spoken of, Gen. vi. 4. whose outrages and violence helped to bring on the universal deluge.

WHETHER the compilers of the Talmud thought that Moses might be the better instructed to write the history of the flood, by having a sight of these *Nephilim* vouchsafed him, and learning from them their own story, I know not. But their name, as well as me-

\* Job. xxvi. 5.

mory, was so famous, that it became in after-times a common name for giants, or men of great bulk and strength; as *Rephaim* did for the same reason.

THUS Numb. xiii. 33. *And there we saw the giants, (Heb. ha-nephilim) sons of Anak, which come of the giants, (min ban-nephilim, again) and we were in our own fight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their fight.*

THE origine of the name is not so well agreed on by the learned. The most probable account seems to be this; that as *naphal* sometimes signifies to *fall away*, or to *make a defection*, (for thus Jeremiah is taxed, Chap. xxxvii. 13. *Thou fallest away*, attah nophel, *to the Chaldeans*, and replies in the same phrase, *enemi nophel*, I fall not away to the Chaldeans,) *nephil*, נפיל, with the *jod* inserted as the third letter, which is always emphatical, signifies an apostate by way of eminence. And these *Nephilim* therefore were apostate giants: for that giants they were, is evident from the use of the word elsewhere.

As such, the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus describes them, Chap. xvi. 7. *God was not pacified* (εἰς τοὺς ἀρχαίους γιγάντας, οἱ ἀνίστασθαι ἐν τῇ ἰσχυρί τῇ ἀφροσύνῃ αὐτῶν) *towards the giants of old, who apostatised in the strength of their folly; or from a foolish pride and conceit of their own might.* For that he speaks of the *antediluvian* giants here, seems plain. And it is remarkable of this writer, that he borrows his phrase from hence, to express a proud and impious spirit, calling it γιγαντιώδης ψυχὴν, the soul of a giant\*. Which shews what an impression this great event had made upon the minds of those to whom it was transmitted down.

IT was from an obscure tradition of the universal deluge, probably, that the Heathen entertained a fear of drowning above all other deaths†: not from any philosophical conceit, as if water would extinguish the

\* Eccles. xxiii. 4.

† See the learned Daubuz on Revel. xx. 13.



soul †; but because they were afraid, that being involved in the same fate with the *Rephaim*, they might go to the same place.

WHETHER the Jewish lady I am going to speak of had any apprehensions of this kind, I know not; but the thing is to our purpose, and very memorable in itself.

A Saracen commander of a fleet from Corduba in Spain, cruising on the coast of Palestine, took a vessel

† *Extinguish the soul.* This opinion was embraced by some in Servius's time, as appears from his note on *Aeneid*. 1. V. 96. Where to account for the seemingly pusillanimous behaviour of Aeneas in a storm,

*Exemplo Aeneæ solvantur frigore membra,  
Ingemunt, &c.*

he says, it was not merely an apprehension of death, but the kind of death that alarmed and terrified him. *Grave est enim secundum Homerum, &c.* 'For it is a grievous thing, according to Homer, to perish by shipwreck; because the soul is of the nature of fire, and therefore seems to be extinguished in the sea, as in a contrary element.'

One could wish he had told us, where to find this notion in Homer. Instead whereof he only gives us a scrap of Virgil— *Igneus est ollis vigor*—

But if this were Virgil's philosophy, it does not appear that he learnt it from the Greek poet.

And yet from a single line of Homer's, where he speaks of the death of the lesser Ajax, Synesius makes the same conclusion, viz. τὸν καὶ ὁδῶτος θάνατον ἐλάβηεν εἶναι τῆς ψυχῆς, that drowning extinguishes the soul.

The line of Homer is this—

Ὀς δ' αὖ μὲν ἐνθ' ἀπόλωλεν, ἐπὶ πῶν ἄλμυρον ὕδαρ.

\* So Ajax there perished, having drank the salt water.

Synesius lays a stress upon the word ἀπόλωλεν, (or ἐξ ἀπόλωλεν, as he reads it instead of ἐνθ' ἀπόλωλεν) perished. But as this argument is too slight to build much upon, (for Homer uses the word ἀπολίσσθαι, δόμον δάσσει, ἀπὸ δόμου δάσσει, \* &c. without intending any such destruction as is here supposed) he endeavours to corroborate it with that circumstance, of Ajax his not appearing among the other Grecian heroes in the two *Nekades*, as he calls them, or representations given of the state of souls in *Hades*, in the eleventh and twenty-fourth books of the *Odyssey*.

But there was a very good reason why this Ajax should not make his appearance there. For he died in the very act of impiety, and a defiance of the gods; and therefore must be supposed to have gone

fel bound for Sebaſte with ſome learned Jews on board; one eminent Rabbin amongſt the reſt, called R. Moſes the father of R. Enoch; together with his wife, whoſe name is omitted in the ſtory, though it well deſerved to be recorded. It is only ſaid of her, that ſhe was a woman of exquisite beauty: and the brute of a captain being about to raviſh her, ſhe calls to her huſband, (who was within hearing, but in chains) and aſks him in Hebrew, whether they who were drowned in the ſea, ſhould revive at the re-

gone to Tartarus. And as there was no tradition of any particular puniſhment assigned him there, (ſuch as that of Tantalus, Sifyphus, or Tityus, which were of great fame and uſe for the example's ſake) we may conclude, that Homer would not invent a puniſhment for him; but with great delicacy of judgment paſſes over this unhappy countryman of his in ſilence, where he could not ſhew him with propriety or decency.

The fate of Ajax was intended by the poet, no doubt, to inculcate into thoſe who tempt the hazards of the ſea, a due ſenſe of their dependance upon providence, and a behaviour ſuitable to this perſuaſion. His crime was, that when he had juſt ſurvived a ſhipwreck, and was got ſafe (as he thought) upon a rock; he boated that he had eſcaped the dangers of the ſea, even in ſpight of the gods.

Φῶς εἰς αἴαντις θεῶν θυγέειν μέγα λάϊμα θαλάσσης.

But a wave (ſays the poet) ſent from Neptune who had overheard him, ſoon daſhed this boafter off the rock, and ſunk him in the deep.

One would think the life of a ſea-faring man, which is ſo full of hazard, ſhould naturally incline him to religion. And ſo (I believe) it will, where the principles of religion are once well planted, and where there is a ſenſible and ſerious turn of mind.

I have more than once, with great pleaſure, read a paragraph in Dampier's Voyages round the world; where he gives you, without art or diſguiſe, the feelings of his own heart, when he was toſſed in a little boat, in a dark and ſtormy night, far from land, and in danger every moment of being ſwallowed up in the deep. The conflicts of his mind on this occaſion; his ſad reflections on his paſt life, and his renewed repentance; together with a thankful recollection of the many miraculous providences he had formerly experienced; his applying to God by prayer for his aſſiſtance; and ſo compoſing himſelf to a ſtate of ſubmiſſion to the divine will— Theſe are ſtrokes of nature, that do credit to the author, at the ſame time that they delight and inſtruct the reader; and may be ſeen, p. 496, 497. of his firſt volume, drawn out to view with equal modeſty and ingenuity.



urrection of the dead. He replied in the words of Psalm lxviii. 22. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Basan, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.* Upon which she immediately threw herself into the sea, and was drowned\*.

THIS lady, we may observe, had no farther apprehensions about the kind of death that presented itself to her, as soon she was satisfied as to the consequences of it. For drowning is, perhaps, one of the easiest deaths that can be undergone.

WHAT made it therefore so terrible to the Heathen, must be either a fear that they should want the rites of burial, (though this too might be supplied by their friends, and an empty tomb erected when the body was not found—) or rather, as I said, a fear of being involved in the same fate with the *Rephaim* or that wicked race, who were swallowed up in the flood.

THERE is a remarkable expression used by the prophet Ezekiel, in his threatening of the prince of Tyre, (Chap. xxviii.) which seems to confirm this notion. *Because thine heart is lifted up (says he) and thou hast said I am a god; I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas†— Behold therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee— and they shall bring thee down to the pit; and thou shalt die the deaths of the slain in the midst of the seas†: that is, thou shalt die the deaths of those that perished in the flood— Deaths in the plural, as inti-*

\* See the story in Schickard's *Jus Regum Hebr.* p. 169. who takes it from R. Abraham Levita.

I suppose R. Moses took his sense of this text of the Psalmist from the Chaldee Paraphrast, who interprets it of a resurrection; and explains the former branch, *I will bring again from Basan,* thus— *I will bring again the just that are dead and devoured by wild beasts—* understanding *Basan*, as put for the beasts that inhabit there. But Abarbanel has something still more refined. Instead of *Mib-basban*, he reads the same Hebrew letters *Mib-he-shen*, that is, *from between the teeth—* meaning it likewise of the beasts that had devoured them. *Reducam ab inter dentes, & reducam ex profundo maris: quo innuit se vitæ restitutum eos qui comederunt animalia, tam in terra quam in mari.* See Pocock, *Porta Mosis*, p. 125. *Not. Misc.*

† Ezek. xxviii. 2.

† Ezek. xxviii. 7, 8.

mating a still farther punishment even after death ; such as that impious race experienced, and such as this haughty prince had well deserved by his mad pride, and blasphemous impiety.

AND therefore with the same emphasis he tells him, Ver. 10. *Thou shalt die the deaths* (the double death) *of the uncircumcised*—— that is, of unbelievers and enemies to God.

THIS is not the only place in this prophecy, where the destruction by the deluge is alluded to : for this, and the fall of angels, being two of the greatest events that ever happened, and the most remarkable of God's judgments ; it was very natural for the prophets to recur to them, when they would raise their style, in the description of the fall of empires and of tyrants.

THUS we find a very beautiful allusion to both those great events, in this same prediction of the prophet Ezekiel, of the downfall of Tyre and its haughty prince, in the 26th and the two following chapters.

As the style of this eloquent prophet is wonderfully adapted to the subjects whereof he treats ; he compares the destruction of this famous maritime city to a vessel shipwrecked in the sea, and so sends them to the *people of old time*, as he calls them, that were swallowed up in the universal deluge. Their prince he compares to the leader of the rebel angels, whose pride had given him such a dreadful fall.

*Thy rowers*, (says he, describing the fate of this great and populous city, as of a tall ship richly laden) *thy rowers have brought thee into great waters ; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas* —\*. And again— *Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall ; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure—— When I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee : when I shall bring thee down with them that descend*

\* Ezek. xxvii. 26.



into the pit, with the people of old time †. The Hebrew is, *el yam volam*, to the people of old time— That is, undoubtedly, the generation that were swept away by the flood; for none can be so naturally meant here, as these.

THE king of this proud city, who, it seems, affected divine honours, he compares to an *anointed cherub*, or one of the chiefs and rulers of the angelical host, thus remarkably described, as one that was *perfect in his ways from the day that he was created, till iniquity was found in him †*: One, who had his place of residence upon the *holy mountain of God*; and walked up and down in the midst of the *stones of fire* ||, or among the stars. But now that *thou hast sinned*, (says he) *therefore will I cast thee as prophane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire—I will cast thee to the ground—I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, and it shall devour thee—All they that know thee among the people, shall be astonished at thee: Thou shalt be a terrour, and never shalt thou be any more\*\**.

WHOEVER compares this passage of Ezekiel with a parallel place in Isaiah, Ch. xiv. where the downfall of the king of Babylon is foretold in the same prophetic language, will soon perceive that they throw a reciprocal light upon each other, and that the fall of angels is alluded to in both. *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning? For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell\*, or to Sheól, as the Hebrew is; that is, the lower Sheól—* For he had told him just before, that *Sheól*

† Ezek. xxvi. 18, 19, 20.

‡ Ezek. xxviii. 15.

|| Ver. 14.

\* Ezek. xxviii. 16, 17, 18, 19.

\* Isaiah xiv. 12, 13, 14, 15.

from beneath should be moved for him to meet him at his coming, and should stir up the Rephaim †, the inhabitants of the lower *Sheol*, in a sort of mock-pomp, to receive and entertain him. And the words, *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, &c.* seem to be a part of that congratulatory speech with which they address him.

THE beauty and propriety of these allusions of the prophets will appear with greater lustre, when it is considered, that the host of heaven were the objects of the Heathen idolatry, both the visible and invisible host, as well the angels as the lights of heaven. For the superstition seems to have been originally the same, as the worship of the heavenly bodies terminated in the worship of those angels, or intelligences, that were believed to animate or conduct them. And hence we see a reason why the angels are called stars, and morning stars in Scripture. As in that passage of Job, (Chap. xxxviii. 7.) where at the sight of God's creation, it is said, that *the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.* And so here; the covering (or protecting) Cherub in Ezekiel is the same with *Lucifer son of the morning* in Isaiah. Thus while the prophets describe the overthrow of an idolatrous prince or state by a fallen angel, or a falling star; they only make their gods to tumble with them.

I MAY seem perhaps, to some, digressing all this while from the main point I intended, which was to shew the notions that prevailed amongst the ancient Hebrews concerning the place and state of souls after death. But it is easy to perceive, that the two particulars I have mentioned, have a close connection with the other: for if they believed that a part of the angels sinned, and fell, and were cast down to hell, or to the lowermost *Sheol*; and that the wicked race of men that perished in the flood, went likewise to the same place; there can be no doubt but they believed that the souls of all wicked men went thither after

† Ibid. ver. 9.



death. And of this too I have given some proof. And perhaps the Heathen had no other foundation for their belief of a Tartarus, than an obscure tradition of those two points; the one delivered under the fabulous story of the Titans, in the reign of Saturn; the other of the giants, in the reign of Jupiter\*. For both these proud opposers of the gods were sent *ad impia tartara*, as Virgil calls it, there to be punished for their impiety.

BUT if this be a digression, I shall trespass on the reader's patience yet a little longer, while I give him one quotation more from the prophet Ezekiel, which perhaps will bring us into the way again.

It is in Chapter xxxii. where he is bid to *take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt*. And as the style of these lamentations were always figurative and poetical, he describes this powerful prince as a great dragon† or crocodile, (a creature common in the Nile) *troubling the waters with his feet, and fouling the rivers*, or disturbing all the nations round about him; and threatens to take him in his net, and cast him forth upon the open field, as a prey to the fowls of the air, and beasts of the field‡; so that he should no more trouble the waters with his feet, but the rivers should run (smooth) as oil||.

AND in the following part of the chapter, having sent Pharaoh and his multitude, *el eretz tachti-joth*, to the land of the inferi, (ver. 18.) he represents the inhabitants of these lower regions as addressing the king of Egypt, in the same manner as Isaiah in the passage above-mentioned, describes them welcoming the king of Babylon, ver. 21. *The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of Sheál*, &c.

\* See the Note of Servius on Virg. *Æn.* 6. 580. *Hic genus antiquum*, &c.

† So the word תַּנִּים, *tannim*, here signifies, not a whale, as it is translated—

‡ Ezek. xxxii. 2, 3, 4.      || Ibid. ver. 14.

*The strong among the mighty*—So it is in our translation; but the Hebrew is אֱלִי גִבּוֹרִים, *elé gibborim*, that is, the *gods of the mighty*—\* meaning, no doubt, their heroic gods; whose souls, through the superstition of that people, had placed among the stars, the prophet, on the contrary, intimates to them were to be found in *Sheól*; thus ridiculing the worship of their men deities, of which Egypt was the great promoter, if not the inventor.

BUT the most remarkable thing to our purpose in this threatening of Pharaoh, is the prophet's telling him more than once, that he should *lie down with the uncircumcised* †.

It is well known, that circumcision was in use and honour among the Egyptians; whatever reasons they might have for it, or what advantages soever they

\* Beside the oddness of the expression, *the strong among the mighty*, it is remarkable, that when *elim*, or in construction *elé*, means *fortes, strong*; it is always written with a Jod inserted thus, אֱלִים *elim*, or אֱלִי *eilé*—Thus Job xli. 25. *mis-seth-o jaguru* אֱלִים, *elim*, when he raiseth himself up, the mighty are afraid. So Exod. xv. 15. *The mighty men of Moab* are called מְלִי מוֹאב *eilé Moab*. And so 2 Kings xxiv. 15. *etb* אֱלִי *eilé ba-aretz*, the mighty of the land.

But אֵל *el*, without the Jod is *Deus*; and אֱלִים *elim* or *elé* in the plural, always gods—Thus Dan. xi. 36. אֱלִים אֵל *el elim*, *Deus deorum, God of Gods*. So Exod. xv. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord*, אֱלִים *ba-elim* amongst the gods. And ps. lxxxix. 6. *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty*, Heb. אֱלִים בְּנֵי, *Sons of the Gods, can be likened unto the Lord?*

So our prophet Ezekiel is very exact in observing this difference: For where he speaks of the mighty men of the earth, he interposes the Jod as a second letter, thus Chap. xvii. 13. *He hath also taken the mighty of the land*, *etb* אֱלִי *eilé ba-aretz*. But as here it is אֵל *elé gibborim*, without the Jod, it must carry the other sense.

The lexicographers (at least those I have consulted) appear to have no notion of this difference; for they use the one word for the other in the texts they quote. Robertson, for example, writes it אֱלִי *eilé gibborim*, as well as *eilé ba-aretz*, in these two texts of Ezekiel. And Schindler, as well as he, has אֱלִים instead of אֵל, Job xli. 25. (or ver. 16. as it is in the Hebrew) But they should have looked more narrowly into their bibles, where the two words are very accurately distinguished.

† Ezek. xxxii. 19, 28.

hoped



hoped from it. But the circumcision of this Heathen prince, the prophet plainly tells him, should be of no avail to him after death: for an idolater and unbeliever, (to be) sure though circumcised, must be in the same state there with other unbelievers. He should be laid with the uncircumcised; and find the same bad reception in the other world.

BUT does not this of the prophet plainly speak a difference betwixt the death and consequences of it to the uncircumcised or unbelievers, and that of the circumcised believers, or God's people? And consequently tend to confirm the truth of that notion, that God's covenant with Abraham, of which circumcision was the seal, implied in it the promise of a future resurrection? And if so, it is unreasonable, surely, to suppose, that the body of the people, who were all without exception, by an express law, commanded to be circumcised, should be unacquainted with the very design and nature of that solemn rite, by which they were admitted into covenant with God.

AND if this be once allowed, it will give light to some other phrases that stand connected with it; as particularly to that very remarkable one, Gen. xvii. 14. *And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.*

THE full import of this threat cannot well be understood, without knowing what was meant by the phrase so often used, of *being gathered to their people* when they died\*. But by this phrase, as I shall shew by and by, they expressed the happiness of the intermediate state betwixt their death and resurrection.

\* It is remarkable, that both are expressed in the plural *בְּיָמֵינוּ* *Yammim, peoples*. Which therefore cannot be well understood of the present generation only, but must mean the several generations of good men that were gone before them; to whose assembly, as they hoped to be gathered when they died, so the uncircumcised are threatened to be cut off from it.

It is yet further remarkable, that as here is a privilege intimated by the prophet of the circumcised or believers in the state of death; so there is a punishment intimated of the uncircumcised or unbelievers, ver. 27. that though they were *gone down to Sheol with their weapons of war*, and were honoured with a sumptuous burial, *their swords laid under their heads*, (*suaſq; arma viro*—as Virgil describes the Heathen funerals) yet *their iniquities should be upon their bones*; because they were the terror of the mighty (great tyrants and oppressors) in the land of the living.

I THINK it is impossible to find a consistent meaning in these passages, if believers and unbelievers, good and bad, the circumcised and uncircumcised, were thought to be all levelled in death.

BUT as I have already shewn, that there was a place peculiar to the bad souls, in the opinion of the ancients under the *Old Testament*, viz. the lower *Sheol*, or the congregation of the *rephaim*; so I come now to shew, that they had a place likewise for good souls. For when they speak of they condition after death, the phrase is, that they are gathered to their fathers, or their people,—that is, to the assembly of good and pious souls, worshippers of the true God, who were admitted into covenant with him, and lived and died in the observance of that covenant; as the old patriarchs, the ancestors of the Jewish people did.

THUS in the book of Genesis, it is said of Abraham, (Chap. xv. 15.) *Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace*. And at his death, (Chap. xxv. 8.) that he *was gathered to his people*. The same thing being meant by both expressions.

OF Ishmael it is said, Gen. xxv. 17. that he *was gathered to his people*. The same is said of Isaac, Gen. xxxv. 29. and of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 29, 33.

So in the book of Numbers, another of the books of Moses, it is said of Aaron, Chap. xx. 24. that he *was gathered to his people*. And of Moses, Chap. xxvii. 13. *Thou shalt be gathered to thy people, as Aaron thy*



*thy brother was gathered.* The same expression is used of Moses, Num. xxxi. 2. and Deut. xxxii. 50.

AFTER this we read no more of their being gathered to *their people*, but *their fathers*.

THUS in the book of Judges, after saying, (Chap. ii. 8.) *And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord died—and they buried him, &c.* it is added, ver. 10. *And also all that generation were gathered to their fathers.*

THIS, no doubt, is spoken, in a way of charity, of all of them in general, as they had been obedient to the law of God under the conduct of Joshua, and of the elders that survived him: for it is said expressly, ver. 7. *And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua.*

BUT after these, as it follows, verse 10. *There arose another generation which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel—and did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim; and forsook the Lord God of their fathers.*

OF these it is no where said, nor, I think, of any wicked men, that they were gathered to their fathers. Of Jeroboam it is only said, that *he slept* (Heb. *jishcab*, lay down, or died) *with his fathers*, (1 Kings xiv. 20.) And so of Rehoboam in the same chapter. The same is said of many others, both good and bad indifferently: For indeed this is the phrase most commonly used of those that died, *vajishcab yim abothav, and he lay down with his fathers.*

BUT that this means something very different from being gathered to their fathers, seems plain from Job xxvii. 19. where he says, *The rich man shall lie down (jishcab) but shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he is not:* That is, the wicked rich man (for of such he was speaking) shall die, but shall not be gathered to the assembly of the good and pious souls: he openeth his eyes in the other world, and finds himself quite lost and miserable. For that the word gathered

thered was sometimes put for being gathered to their fathers, or their people, we have a plain example, Num. xxvii. 13. where of Aaron, it is only said that he was *gathered*: and yet the same, no doubt, was meant by it, as was expressed before, Chap. xx. 24. that he should *be gathered to his people*.

THESE may seem niceties, and little things to the generality of readers; but upon these little niceties (if I may borrow an expression from the rabbins) *magni montes pendent, great things sometimes depend*.

AND therefore I must observe further, that the good king Josiah, to whom an immature death was promised as a blessing, has it delivered to him in this phrase, 2 (Kings xxii. 19, 20.) *Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord—I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold therefore I will gather thee unto thy fathers*—A strange promise, had it meant no more but, thou shalt lie down with thy fathers, or, thou shalt die. Compare it with the favour granted Hezekiah, and it will appear still more strange. Isai. xxxviii. 5. *Go, say to Hezekiah, thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.* And yet in the character of Hezekiah, religious as he was, there seems to have been somewhat more of alloy, than in that of this excellent prince. Hezekiah however had his life prolonged, and the evil threatened to his people was not executed in his days. Josiah has a promise indeed that *his eyes should not see the evil that was to be brought upon his kingdom*: but how was it to be fulfilled? Not by deferring the evil, but by shortening of his days. And can we think then, that nothing more was meant by the phrase here used of being gathered to his fathers, but only the cold comfort that he should die?

THE revival of the phrase, after so long an interval, has something in it worthy of our notice. For it seems to have been quite laid aside from the time of Joshua, or of that generation, to this; nor is it ever used



used of any other of the kings of Israel or Judah. But here the reason for using it is as evident, as the occasion was singular. And by the way, ~~the~~ long life and reign of Manasses the grandfather of Jofiah, and the much shorter one of this pious prince, who lived not to attain his fortieth year, presents us with a difficulty in the administration of the theocracy, utterly unmountable, upon a supposition that the temporal promises and threatenings of the law are to be understood in their strictest sense, and to respect particular persons; and at the same time that they had no belief or expectation of a *future state*.

It is added indeed in the following part of this prophetic message to Jofiah, *And thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace*. Which some would have to mean the same with the former expression, and both to signify no more than the burial. But the being gathered to their fathers, or their people, and being buried, are two things evidently distinguished in Scripture; the one being the immediate consequent of death, the other deferred sometimes for many days, and related in its proper order; as may be seen of Jacob, Gen xlix. 33, &c. Beside that the word in the original is not grave, but graves \*, in the plural; meaning (no doubt) the sepulchres of his ancestors the kings of Judah. So that the word *gathered* is here used with the same propriety, as in the other branch of the sentence. In short, as the rites of burial were esteemed by the Jews, as well as other nations, a most important thing; here is a twofold blessing promised to Jofiah, viz. That his soul should be gathered to the souls of his pious ancestors, and his earthly part should be likewise joined to theirs, and laid to rest in the sepulchres of the kings of Judah.

It is moreover remarkable, that he is here said to be gathered to the grave *in peace, be-shalom*, though he was slain by the sword. But *shalom*, or *peace*, is the Hebrew term for blessedness, or that which always

\* קברות—לך—2 Kings xxii. 20.

comprehends and implies it, the favour of God. So that every way the instance before us is full and clear to our purpose.

To return then, and recapitulate what has been said:—It appears, that the existence of the separate soul in a certain place and state, and the distribution of the good and bad into two different classes or societies, was evidently the belief of the ancients under the *Old Testament*; and that all along from the beginning, as far as we can perceive, for it runs through the books of Moses, as well as of the prophets.

If little be said about the condition of souls in either place, or their speculations concerning it seem to have been less interesting; (for it is hard to suppose, that they had no interesting speculations at all about it,) the reason seems clear: it was because they looked beyond to it, to a resurrection and an age to come, which had something far more interesting in it. And if this belief of theirs was founded on the covenant God made with Abraham, and so connected with their expectation of the Messiah; it supposes no perfection in the Mosaic dispensation, that can be in the least disparaging to the Christian.

## S E C T. X.

**A**S a further illustration therefore of the subject we are upon, let us enquire what was the belief of the Jews in our Saviour's time: for this will probably reflect some light upon the more ancient times.

AND it appears plain from the *New Testament*, that they believed (all but the Sadducees) a resurrection, and a world, or age, to come; the *volam ba-ba* so often mentioned by the Rabbins. But I do not appeal to them for the sentiments of the Jews in Christ's time: The Gospels are a surer guide. Now that this was their belief at that time, appears evident from our Saviour's accommodating his words to it, in his answer to that question of the Sadducees,



*Whose wife shall she be, &c.* Luke xx. 34. *The children of this age, οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τῆς τῆς, marry and are given in marriage: But οἱ παταξισθέντες αἰῶνος ἐκείνης τυχεῖν, they who shall be accounted worthy to attain that other age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, but are equal to the angels—— speaking of the happiness of good men after the resurrection.*

AND when our Saviour in the following verses proves a resurrection from the words of God to Moses, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; and adds, *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*\*——, there is no question, but he here likewise accommodates himself to the preconceptions of his audience; for we find the argument was presently apprehended and approved. But sure, the proof must needs have appeared obscure and unsatisfactory, but upon one of these two suppositions, or both, *viz.* That the covenant God made with Abraham and the Patriarchs to be their God, implied in it the promise of a *future happy resurrection* upon their due observance of the covenant; or else that the separate existence of the soul inferred a *future resurrection*; and that the two doctrines were connected with each other in the common apprehension and belief. Remove but these foundations, and it will be difficult, if not impossible, to shew Christ's argument to be conclusive.

As for those who think, that it reaches no further than to a proof of the subsistence of the soul, they seem to have overlooked our Saviour's words, where he calls it expressly a proof of the *resurrection*. *That the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush*†. Shewed, that is, by recording what God spake to him at the bush, *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* Here stands the proof of the *resurrection*, in God's covenanting with Abraham and the others to be their God. What our Saviour adds is only a further illustration

\* Luke xx. 37, 38.

† Luke xx. 37.

of it—— God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him—— That is, All to whom he is a God, all that are in covenant with him—— They are now subsisting in their separate souls; and shall hereafter, in the age to come, rise to a state of happiness both of soul and body.

AND by the way, if this be the import of the phrase, *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* it shews us in the strongest point of light, the wisdom and goodness of God in revealing himself to Moses under this character, and leaves no room to doubt, what that recompence of reward was, which he is said by the apostle to the Hebrews to have respect to †. For he knew very well, that the covenant God made with Abraham and the others extended to their posterity, if they walked in the religious steps of these their forefathers. That God would be his God, as well as theirs, if he approved himself his faithful servant; and would crown him with an ample and a glorious recompence in the life to come. And what motive could be so powerful to animate him faithfully to discharge that great commission which God was now going to lay upon him? It is true, we find him a little diffident and reluctant in taking upon him so great a charge. *Who am I, that I should go in to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?* \* But this proceeded not from any doubt of his reward, but merely from a doubt of his capacity to execute a commission so extraordinary; and is an instance of that modesty and meekness, which was a very distinguishing part of the character of this great man, and gives a lustre to his other shining qualities.

I MIGHT observe further, that if this were the ground of Moses his belief of a resurrection and a future state, (as it does not appear that he had any other, beside this and the other revelations and promises of God, which he has recorded in the Pentateuch) this, sure, ought to free him from all suspicion of studiously concealing this doctrine, or any part of it.

† Heb. xi. 26.

\* Exod. iii. 11.



THE books of Moses are as the text, upon which the following prophets expatiate and descant. Numerous are the places in these latter, where a *future happy state* to God's people is foretold, and described in terms which no earthly happiness can come up to †. And if we inquire into the ground of these their expectations, they either point us to the covenant God made with Abraham and the Patriarchs; or the same covenant and promises, as they were afterward renewed to David and his family. Moreover these hopes appear connected with the expectation of some one great person, called expressly by the prophet Daniel the Messiah; described in every minute essential character with wonderful exactness by the other prophets,

† Let any one, for example, but read the 60th chapter of Isaiah, where some future glorious state of God's people is foretold; and he will soon perceive, that as it hath not hitherto been, so it is impossible it should be fulfilled in this world; where there will be always tares among the wheat, good and bad men mixed together, and consequently a mixture of hazard and uncertainty, of happiness and misery.

In direct opposition to which the prophet declares, ver. 18. *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.* And just after— *Thy people also shall be all righteous*—

Here then we see this state described by two things, which are no where to be found but in the world to come, viz. a freedom from violence and destruction, or an absence of all evil; and an universal righteousness amongst its inhabitants. Nay further, for fear they should mistake him, or understand him of this present world; the prophet, in the noble ardour of his description, blots out this sun and moon, (as it were) that by their rising and setting might give an idea of changeableness or an unfixed state, and raises their thoughts to that uncreated light essential, that can never set, or suffer diminution. Ver. 19, 20. *The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. The people also shall be all righteous*— Well might St. Peter say, *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, (for such a prophecy as this, sure, must be interpreted as such) look for new heavens and a new earth, (or a new world) wherein dwelleth righteousness,* 2 Pet. iii. 13.

and pointed out to them from the very first by Moses in more than one passage of his books.

AND that these things were well understood (in the general, at least) by the Jews before our Saviour's time, appears from that resolute constancy with which they suffered for their religion under Antiochus, and the principle upon which they did so. Which, as we learn from the story of the seven famous brothers and their mother, in the second book of the Maccabees (told with that natural simplicity which gives it a great air of truth, whatever may be thought of some other parts of the book-) was this—A belief that they died under God's covenant of everlasting life \* — that God would give them breath and life again† — that the king of the world would raise them up who died for his laws to everlasting life ‡ — And again, *It is good, (says one of the brothers) being put to death by men, to look for hope from God, to be raised up again by him : But as for thee, (addressing himself to Antiochus) thou shalt have no resurrection to life* ||. Such a monster of cruelty (he knew) would only rise to shame and everlasting contempt, according to the prophet ¶ ; or to a punishment far worse even than these words import. For (I think) the Jews of those days had not embraced that mischievous error of David Kimchi's, (in his comment on Psalm i.) *Impiorum, non esse resurrectionem ; sed animam, cum corpore, interire.*

THOUGH this second book of the Maccabees be among the apocryphal books, yet 'as to the truth of the history, (here told us) it was never questioned in the Jewish church, as appears from Josephus, and their other writers. And it is moreover confirmed by the divine author of the epistle to the Hebrews, who manifestly refers to it, Chap. xi. 35. where discoursing of the faith and patience of the saints before Christ, he mentions some who were tortured not accepting deliverance, that they might

\* 2 Mac. vii. 36. † Ib. v. 23. ‡ Ver. 9. || Mac. vii. 14. ¶ Dan. xii. 2.



‘ obtain a better resurrection’. I give the words of the learned bishop Bull, Sermon V. 1. p. 337. And whoever desires to see the sentiments of this great divine upon the point in question, may find them in the same sermon very fully and clearly expressed.

It is very remarkable, that our Saviour not only appeals to Moses and the prophets in attestation of his own divine mission and character, but where he treats of the resurrection and the general judgment, so evidently alludes to the words of the prophets which were read in their synagogues every sabbath-day; that his audience could not but perceive it, and make suitable reflections on it.

Thus where he says, Luke xxi. 27. *Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory*: And John v. 27. *that God hath given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man*; could his Jewish hearers think of any other Son of Man, than him that was spoken of by the prophet Daniel? *who came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days— And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom— His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*, Dan. vii. 13, 14. This prophet is cited by name, upon a like occasion, Matt. xxiv. 15. Mark xiii. 14. And our Saviour’s words, John v. 28. *The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation*; carry so near a resemblance with that of Dan. xii. 2. *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*; that his hearers, who had often heard these words of Daniel read to them, would naturally recollect them, and think our Saviour’s *All*, (as the learned now do) a good interpretation of the prophet’s *Many*.

I MIGHT observe the same of Ezekiel’s famous vision of dry bones, (Chap. xxxvii.) wherein there are  
some

some particulars alluded to by our blessed Saviour in the gospels. As the prophet is bid, Ver. 9. *Son of man, prophesy unto the wind, (or spirit) and say—Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, (or spirit) and breathe upon these slain, that they may live:* and accordingly, at the voice of the prophet, (here called son of man, as a type of another and a greater person so called) *the dry bones came together, the sinews and flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them,* and at length the breath (or spirit) *came into them, and they lived* \*. So our Saviour tells us, that *the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth* †, and that he will *send his angels, who shall gather together his elect from the four winds* †.

I took no notice of this vision of Ezekiel, nor yet of the forenamed texts of Daniel, in the former sections; my design being not to single out every passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a resurrection or a future state; but rather to give a general view of the belief of the people of God in all times back to the times of Moses, and before it.

NEVERTHELESS, as the generality of commentators regard this vision and prophecy of Ezekiel, as no other than a figurative representation and prediction of a return of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon, or some other of their captivities and dispersions; it may not be amiss, in this place, to consider it with attention. And perhaps we shall find, that whatever hopes it might give them of a temporal and national deliverance or prosperity, yet there was evidently something further designed; and that to comfort them in their distressed situation with the prospect of a future resurrection in a proper sense, was at least as much intended by the Spirit of God, or rather more so than the other.

In the first place, the vision itself affords a very lively image of the resurrection.

\* Ezek. xxxvii. 7, 8, 10. † John v. 28, 29. || Matt. xxiv. 31.



NEXT, they who are raised to life again, are said (ver. 10.) to be *an exceeding great army*. The Hebrew is still more emphatical, and even labours for expression, styling it *chail gadol meod meod*, *A very very great army*. Like that of *all nations, kindreds, and people*, (mentioned in the Apocalypse\*) *which no man could number*.

It is further observable, that these dry bones, so miraculously raised to life, are called, (ver. 11.) the *whole House of Israel*: an expression, to which the return from the captivity of Babylon can never answer. For it is most certain, that the whole House of Israel did not return; no, nor yet the whole House of Judah, but only a remnant of them.

If some more glorious return of that people, and their conversion to the Christian faith is still to be expected; when *after the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, all Israel shall be saved*, according to St. Paul †; yet it may be questioned, whether even this will fully answer the intent of this prophecy.

FOR, to have a right notion of this matter, it may behove us to consider carefully the complaint of the captive Jews, to which this prophetic message is applied as a remedy.

THE complaint we have in these words, ver. 11. *Behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts. For our parts——* that is, as to ourselves, Heb. *la-nu*.

CERTAINLY there must be something meant by this expression: and if there be, let any one judge, whether a deliverance of their sons or grandsons from the Babylonish captivity, (for none can say that they were promised it before the end of seventy years, of which the far greater part was still behind) could any way answer the complaint here made of a lost hope, or a despair, *as to themselves*. Much less a promise of a deliverance to their late posterity, at the distance of

\* Revel. vii. 9.

† Rom. xi. 25, 26.

some hundreds or thousands of years, though we conceive it to be never so great and glorious.

IF it be true what St. Jerome tells us, that *the prophecies of Jeremiah were sent to Babylon, as those of Ezekiel were from Babylon to Jerusalem* †; one would think the complaint here made were directly leveled, by these murmurers, against that prediction of the prophet Jeremiah, Chap. xxv. 12. *And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of Babylon.* And again, Chap. xxix. 10. *Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.*

BUT what is this to us, would they reply? It is good news indeed for our posterity; but as for our parts, *our bones are dried, our hope is lost*——we see no comfort to ourselves in this prediction, since we cannot expect to live so long.

TAKE the words that follow then in their obvious sense, and as a promise of some personal happiness to those who faithfully adhere to God in all their straits and difficulties; and it affords a consolation highly worthy the divine omnipotence and goodness to reach out to his creatures. And though we suppose them before acquainted with the doctrine of the *resurrection*, yet there is something in this plain and circumstantial account of it, delivered with such high authority, that could not but renew upon their minds a pleasing hope and expectation of it, sufficient to silence all complaint.

VER. 12. *Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, (you that are truly such; for this most gracious appellation seems evidently taken from the words of the everlasting covenant so often mentioned, I will be their God, and*

† *Illud autem notandum, quod uno atque eodem tempore Hieremias prophetabat in Hierusalem, & Ezekiel in Babylone, & illius prophetia mittebatur ad captivos, & hujus ad eos qui habitabant in Hierusalem.* Hieron. in Ezek. xii. 7.



*they shall be my people ; ) Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.*

13. *And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.*

14. *And shall put my spirit into you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land : then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.*

THERE will be no difficulty in this passage, if we only take the land of Israel, (ver. 12.) your own land (ver. 14.) as meant of that land of promise, or that *better country* which the faithful all along believed and hoped for, *confessing themselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth* \* — That land (in short) which the true Israel of God, *shall inherit for ever*, (according to the prophet) *where their sun shall no more go down, and the people shall be all righteous* †. Such a prospect as this was exactly fitted to obviate their complaints, which I think no other sense of the words could possibly do.

To which I might add, that as the doctrine of the *Messiah* and a *future state* are evermore united in the views and declarations of the prophets ; so this plain description of a resurrection is followed by as plain a prophecy of the Messiah in the latter part of the chapter : who by the well-known appellation of David, (from whom he was to descend) was to be the *one Shepherd, King, and Prince over Judah and Ephraim*, or the converted Jews and Gentiles ; (for where can Ephraim or the Ten Tribes be found, but among the nations of the earth, with whom they have been long absorbed into one common mass, so as not to be distinguished ? ) and this, *yad yolah, for ever* ‡.

FROM what has been said, I think, it appears, that the doctrine of the *resurrection* was neither taught by Christ, nor received by the Jews as a new doctrine ;

\* Heb. xi. 12, 13. † Isai. lx. 20, 21. ‡ Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 25. but

but that this, as well as their expectation of the Messiah, was founded on the holy Scriptures, the books of Moses, and the prophets. We may add, that neither were they less persuaded, than the Jews are at this day, of the connection or dependance of those two points upon each other.

EVEN a silly woman could express her faith of a resurrection in the strongest and the clearest terms, John xi. 24. saying of her deceased brother—*I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection in the last day.* The answer of our Saviour is remarkable to our purpose; and so is the woman's reply to him, ver. 25. *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life—* (I am that Messiah you expect, and in whom alone you can obtain a happy resurrection to a life immortal :) *Believest thou this?* The woman's answer shews how well she understood him—*She saith unto him, Yea Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God, that should come into the world.* Here she shewed herself a believer indeed; and that she well apprehended the connection that there was betwixt the doctrine of a *Messiah* and a *resurrection*.

A MORE explicit revelation of this great point, how and in what respects our hopes of a happy resurrection depend upon what our blessed Lord transacted for us, was, perhaps the principal thing intended by St. Paul, where he says our Saviour Christ *bath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.* For he could not mean that the doctrine of the *resurrection* was a thing newly brought to light, and taught the Jews for the first time by the Gospel. He himself elsewhere boasts of his being a *Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee*, and so trained up to believe a resurrection from his cradle. The Jews indeed, at least many of them, appear to have entertained gross notions of it; and even this from a mistake of their own Scriptures—*not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*, says our Saviour; intimating, that a right understanding of the Scriptures would have prevented these mistakes. They had learned to think no less grossly



grossly of the kingdom of the Messiah; not for want of light in the books of the prophets, but from their own blindness to it. But still, their belief of a *resurrection*, as well as their expectation of the *Messiah*, is beyond dispute. And it is remarkable, that St. Paul, in the well-known xvth chapter of the first to the Corinthians, not only cites two prophecies together in favour of it, (ver. 54, 55. \*) but draws such a parallel betwixt the first Adam and the second, (ver. 21, 22. which is set out more at large, Rom. 5.) as gives no obscure intimation, that both the doctrine of the *Messiah* and the *resurrection* were revealed from the beginning, and still preserved amongst the faithful, even to our Saviour's time, when both were set in a clearer light.

To the Jews then, it is plain the *resurrection* could be no new doctrine, though to the rest of the world it was so. To them indeed life and immortality was brought to light in the compleatest sense; for they seem to have lost all true notions of a *future state*. Amongst the Greeks and Romans the ancient tradition of *Tartarus* and *Elysium* was in a manner quite exploded, as ill suiting the refined speculations of most of those who made pretensions to philosophy. And the vulgar, whose belief was founded on tradition, soon grew to despise that which they saw the learned had discarded. So that the world was running apace into an absolute disbelief of another life, when it pleased God, in the fullness of time, (for his works are always beautiful in their season) to send his son into the world with a new revelation of it; or rather, to restore the ancient primitive belief; and give men a convincing, and a sensible demonstration of it in his own resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven: and thereby to fix our belief of a *future state* upon such an immoveable foundation, as the di-

\* *Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, (viz. Isai. xxv. 8.) Death is swallowed up in victory. It follows, O death where is thy sting? &c.* cited with a little variation from the Septuagint translation of Hosea, xiii 14.

vine wisdom saw would be sufficient to support it till the day of judgment.

## S E C T. XI.

**B**UT having thus seen the belief of the Jews in Christ's time, as to the doctrine of a *resurrection*; let us proceed to enquire, what their notions were of the *intermediate state*, or the state of *separate souls*.

AND in general we find, that they believed the good to be in a good state, the bad in a bad one; as appears from our Saviour's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, (accommodated, no doubt, to the pre-conceptions of his hearers) where the one is represented as in *Hades*, or *Sheôl*; the lower *Sheôl*; (that is) or place of torment; the other, as in Abraham's bosom, in a state of comfort or refreshment; that is, in the language of the Old Testament, gathered to this great forefather of the Jews, or to the assembly of their pious ancestors, of whom Abraham was considered as the head, and the great father of the faithful. The phrase here, we see, is very little varied from that of the Old Testament——only a circumstance or two added in the parable; as that the soul of Lazarus was carried by angels into this place\*, and its distance from the lower *Sheôl* expressed, as that it was *far off*, and a great unpassable gulph fixed between them.

FROM another passage of the Gospels, I mean our Saviour's promise to the penitent Thief on the Cross, we learn, that paradise was a name at this time likewise given to the place of good souls in the separate state. Which seems to shew that the Jews were somewhat improved in their notions of the happiness of that state. But not by

\* We find even this circumstance mentioned by the Chaldee paraphrast on Cant. iv. 12. with this only difference, that instead of Abraham's bosom, he has *ginta de Yeden*, or *paradise*. *Thy married women* (says he) *shall be modest, as a virgin newly espoused; or like the garden of Eden, where none can be admitted but the just, whose souls are carried thither by the hand of angels,*



their conversing with the Heathen in or after the captivity, (as some have thought) for we see there is nothing of the language of the Heathen in this. Paradise and Abraham's bosom are both of them phrases borrowed from their own Scriptures, and adapted to their purpose. And it is plain, that both must mean the same: for if any soul could be entituled to paradise in the apprehension of the Jews, it must be that of their great progenitor. And therefore to be with Abraham, and to be in paradise, with them must mean one and the same thing.

THIS appears at least to be the notion of the modern Jews, from a commendatory prayer which they have in their office for the dead; and which the Romanists make much of, as if the example of this wretchedly mistaken and forsaken people were any good warrant for their putting up prayers either to or for the dead. But I cite it only as it is remarkable to our purpose. It is addressed to their *fathers of old time, who slept in Hebron*, (for there was the famous cave of Macpelah, bought by Abraham for a burying-place for his family) that they would *open the gates of paradise to the deceased, and say, Let his coming be in peace.* אבות עולם, &c. *Patres seculi, qui dormitis in Hebron, portas horti Eden aperite illi, atque dicite, adventus ipsius fit in pace\**.

How old this Jewish prayer is, I know not: but the Targums or Chaldee Paraphrases, (which are their oldest Books next the Scriptures, and of great account with them, and so may be regarded as the most authentick vouchers for their notions) take frequent occasions to speak of Paradise and Gebenna, (or Gebinnom) as the two different receptacles of good and bad souls after death. Thus the Targum upon Job xxxviii. 17. 18 †. *Have the gates of death been opened*

\* *Voisin, Theolog. Judæorum*, p. 81.

† This Targum upon Job, though (with that upon the other *Hagiographa*) it be ascribed to Joseph the Blinkard, who lived about 500 years after Christ; yet seems, like the *Scholia Græca* upon Homer

opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare if thou knowest it all? interprets it thus—*Nunquid possunt aperiri tibi portæ mortis, & introitus mortis umbræ Gehennæ conspicies? Nunquid intellexisti usque ad latitudinem terræ Paradisi voluptatis* (Chald. ginta de yeden.) *Indica si nosti hæc universa, &c.*

WHERE the Paraphrast having explained the shadow of death by *Gehenna* in the former verse; to make the other correspond with it, he interprets the *breadth of the earth* to mean the breadth of the land of Paradise.

So in other places, we meet with Paradise and *Gehenna*, where one should scarce have expected it from the Hebrew. For example, Job xxviii. 5, 6. *As for the earth, out of it cometh bread; and under it is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of Sapphires; and it bath dust of gold.*

‘UNDER it’ (says the Paraphrast) ‘is *Gehenna*, whose cold snow is turned into the likeness of fire: and Paradise’ (or the garden of *Eden*) ‘which is a place whose stones are sapphires, and the dust of it gold.’

HERE, though he seems to make the situation of Paradise, as well as *Gehenna*, to be under the earth; yet by the riches and the ornaments he bestows upon it, he meant, undoubtedly, to represent it as a very desirable place. Whether he thought it to be situate somewhere in the downward or invisible skies, I know not; but I suppose he could not but think it far enough removed from the centre of the earth, if that was the place of *Gehenna*. Those amongst the Jews, who dream of a terrestrial Paradise, place it somewhere beyond the seas. But the more learned of them, and such whose notions are most elevated, believe it to be under the throne of glory, (as they

Homer ascribed to Didymus, to be rather a collection of interpretations or explications by different hands; for we have sometimes two or three *Targums* upon the same text; so that probably some of them may be as old or older than our Saviour’s time.

(speak)



peak) or lower than the highest heavens, but confining thereupon.

AND here it is time for us to halt, for we are got as high as we can go.

PARADISE, or the garden of *Eden*\*, the garden of God †, as it is called by the prophets, is used by them in a proverbial way, to denote a state of bliss and affluence, such as that which Adam was put into at his creation. And therefore, when applied to the state of the separate soul, must intimate a great degree of happiness. The idea of it will be still raised, by supposing it a celestial, not terrestrial Paradise.

AND such seems to have been the Paradise which was discovered to St. Paul in vision; distinct from, and probably beneath, the third Heaven, of which he had likewise a sight vouchsafed him.

THE order of these visions of St. Paul, (says an excellent writer) is observable. First, he had represented to him the most perfect joys of the third or highest Heaven, of which we hope to be partakers after the resurrection; and then, least so long an expectation should discourage us, he saw also the intermediate joys of Paradise, wherewith the souls of the faithful are refreshed until the resurrection: and for our comfort he tells us, that even these also are inexpressible ‡.

HERE then we are freed at last from that perplexity, which the descent to *Sheöl* might give us. And by the way, we may here see to the bottom (I think) of that error of the Romanists, of their *Limbus patrum* ||, (as they call it) wherein the fathers were

\* Joel ii. 3.

† Ezek. xxxi. 8, 9.

‡ Bishop Bull's Serm. Vol. i. p. 91.

|| It is pleasant to observe, with what exactness these gentlemen give us the geography of these lower regions, as some do that of the moon. Instead of two apartments of *Sheöl*, one for the good, and another for the bad, (which might receive some countenance from Scripture) they make four (or rather, they make four divisions of the lower *Sheöl*; for they suppose them all to be within the bowels

were imprisoned before the coming of our Saviour; and which, upon his descent thither, was emptied by him, and the souls of these good men transported to paradise or heaven, (meaning the highest heavens, for they confound the one with the other) and there admitted to the supreme bliss, the beatific vision.

BUT we read of no such transportation in the holy Scripture. We see only a little change of phrase or notion, and this subsisting before our Saviour's time.

THOUGH it was the belief of the ancients under the *Old Testament*, that all went to *Sheól*; yet they held, that there were two different apartments there, and very different states for the good and bad.

THE place of good souls obtained in after-times the name of paradise, as denoting a state of happiness: but when, or with what authority, imposed, is perhaps difficult to determine \*. However, it is now consecrated

bowels of the earth, in aliquo terræ sinu, as their writers speak. See *Pinsku in Eccles.* p. 780) and tell us, that the lowest part of all is hell; where the desperately wicked are condemned both to the pain of loss, and pain of sense, thence never to be released. The next above it is their purgatory, where souls are condemned to the same pains of loss and sense, but with a prospect of being released however either sooner or later. Above these they suppose two other apartments, which they call, one the *Limbus Infantum*, and the other *Limbus Patrum*. In the former, infants unbaptized are kept, under the pain of loss, but not of sense, there to remain for ever. The uppermost border of *Sheól*, they call *Limbus Patrum*, or apartment of the antient fathers, where they were held under the pain of loss, but not of sense, till the coming of our Saviour Christ, and then translated to heaven.

See *Bellarmino* 1mi Tomi 6 *Controv. General.* Cap. 6. p. 115. (*Octavo Edit.*) *constituunt enim scholastici communi consensu intra terram quatuor sinus, &c.* See also his *Lib. iv. De Christo.* Cap. 9, and 10.

\* There is something in the prophecy of Ezekiel, Chap. xxviii. that might incline one to think, that the garden of Eden or paradise was become by this time with the Jews the happy seat of good souls in their state of separation. For describing the pride and vanity of the prince of Tyre, and his boasted happiness, he first expresses it by this phrase, (Ver. 13.) *Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God*—As blessed and happy in thy own imagination, as the first man in paradise, shall we say? or rather (for he seems to speak of it as a state of felicity still subsisting somewhere) as good souls in the region of the blessed, the celestial paradise. This last seems the more probably to be the meaning, because the prophet



crated by our Saviour's use of it, and his calling the place of good souls in their separation paradise. Not that we have any grounds to think, that it was a place shut before his coming, and then opened by him, as the Romanists believe. The terrestrial paradise, indeed, was shut soon after the fall of man; nor is it now subsisting any where: but the way to the celestial one was opened, from the first promise that was given of a Redeemer.

How much the felicity of that place and state may be increased by our blessed Redeemer's going thither in his separate soul, is another question.

THERE IS no doubt but Abraham, who rejoiced to see our Saviour's day at a distance, was much more rejoiced with the sight of himself in the region of departed spirits; and that good souls from that time forward might perceive a great addition to their happiness. So that Abraham's bosom, or paradise, may be now a much happier place than it was before our Saviour's soul went thither. And though his soul was not left there, but returned to animate his body, and both ascended into the highest heavens; yet his presence once vouchsafed, it is easy to conceive, might have very happy and lasting effects. Nay, that he still vouchsafes them his presence in a certain sense, seems intimated by St. Paul, where he tells us, that he had *a desire to depart, and to be with Christ* \*. Which, (as learned men observe) must imply some happiness arising from the enjoyment of our Saviour's presence, at least in vision, and the consolations rising thence; which perhaps are more than at present we are able to conceive.

ascends a step higher in the following verse; and places this ambitious prince, where he had placed himself in his own high thoughts, among the angels of God, and that of the superior orders. Ver. 14. *Thou art the anointed cherub that coverest, &c.* Nay, we are told, ver. 2. *That his heart was so lifted up as to say, I am God, I sit in the seat of God in the midst of the seas.*

\* 1 Phil. i. 23.

So that an improvement of state may be very well allowed; but this will not infer a change of place; nor do we read of any such thing in the Scriptures.

THE dream, however, might pass unregarded, were it not for the bad use they make of it: I mean, their building upon it that unwarrantable practice of the invocation of saints. For they suppose them to be already admitted not only to paradise, but heaven; that is, the highest heavens, there clearly to behold God himself, one God in three persons, as he is. They are the words of the Florentine council. In short, to see all things in the glass of the Trinity, (as they speak) and thereby to know the particular necessities and wants of those that pray to them; without which the folly and absurdity of such a practice must appear but too plain.

I SHALL make no further reflection upon this gross corruption in religious worship, established on this false foundation, than only to observe, that it may help us to account for a similar practice amongst the Heathen, the worship of men-deities: which I take to have had exactly the same origine, viz. an innovation in the doctrine of a *future state*. At least, there can be no harm in proposing it as a conjecture; for I would not be understood to lay any great stress upon it. But as (they say) what has been may be; so by what is, we may sometimes give a guess at what has been. Nor can it seem surprising, if superstition work the same effect in one age as another.

THE ancient belief was, that the souls of all men went to *Sheol*; which, as in the largest sense, it took in the receptacles both of good and bad souls, was in \* Job's phrase, *beth moyed le-col chai, the house of assembly for all the living*.

Of the state or condition of souls there, very little is said in the *Old Testament*; because good men looked beyond it for a reward of their piety, when they should be released from this state of death, and obtain a blessed resurrection.

\* Job xxx. 23.



THIS hope they expressed by the care bestowed upon their dead bodies, to have them decently interred, and (if possible) in the sepulchres of their ancestors. And as for their souls, they believed they should be gathered to their fathers, or their people, that is, their religious Ancestors, (or, *ἐς χάραν εὐσεβῶν*) there to remain in a state of peace and hope, till the grand period of the resurrection, when they were to emerge into a new state of life and being.

THIS seems evidently to have been the ancient notion of the state of death, and to have obtained universally in the first ages of the world.

AND here was no room therefore to pay divine honours to the dead, till another opinion had prevailed, introduced either by way of flattery and consolation to the surviving friends of the deceased, or from the admiration of some great exploits, or gratitude for extraordinary benefits, that death was *claris viris et faminis dux in cælum*, as Tully expresses it—that persons of eminent and heroic virtue were exempted from the common lot of mortals, and were by death translated immediately to heaven, to partake of the happiness of the gods.

THIS persuasion was accompanied with the religious worship of them, as the guardians and protectors of their country, and of such as honoured them. And the idolatry that before was paid only to the angelick host, as the great ministers of providence; or to the sun and stars, which were supposed to be either animated or conducted by some of those intelligent beings (for I take the superstition to have been originally the same,) was now divided with these other \* new-made gods; who, though at first but few in number, soon increased, as the doctrine that favoured this sort of worship, spread among the nations and prevailed. It was natural to think, that

\* Old Æschylus in his tragedy of *Prometheus Vinc.* alludes frequently to this great revolution in the Heathen worship; and reckons the reign of Jupiter a sort of novel, upstart thing.

*Ναὶ γὰρ διακονοῖς κατέσθ' Ὀλύμπῳ, &c.* 149.

the prince or hero, who in the days of his mortality was a great lover of, and benefactor to his country, might still retain the same affection to it in that exalted state to which he was advanced by death; and therefore they ascribed to him the superintendency of it, and worshipped him as a tutelary deity.

AND the very same superstition soon prevailed in private families. And the piety of a dutiful son advanced his father to the like honour of being a sort of guardian to his family; or the love of a tender father scrupled not to honour, with † ceremonies and sacrifices, a son cut off perhaps untimely; after giving the fairest hopes or specimen of his virtue.

IN general, it became a part of the † private religion of the Heathen, where the worship of men-deities prevailed, to pay a superstitious worship to the *manes* of their deceased friends; though they did not think their souls advanced to heaven, (for a few of the great only had that privilege) but to remain in *Hades* or *Skeél*, the common receptacle of the dead.

INDEED the pride of philosophy, in after-times improved this flattering error into a sort of general doctrine; and argued from the nature of the soul, and its divine original, that if defecate, and pure at its separation from the body, it would mount directly to its kindred stars, and there partake of the happiness of the gods ||.

AND thus the ancient belief was by degrees quite lost and discarded over the greatest part of the world; I mean, wherever the worship of men-deities prevailed. FOR

† Wisd. xiv. 15.

† Here again we have a remarkable agreement between the Heathen worship and that of the Romanists. There is a chapter of Bellarmine's with this title, *Sanctos non canonizatos privatim possz coli, non publice* (in his 7th controversy, L. 1. C. 10.) *That saints not canonized may be worshipped privately but not publickly.* The public worship with both was appropriated to those who had their *revelation* or canonization.

|| From the philosophers, I suppose, it was, that certain here-



FOR it is remarkable, and seems to confirm the account here given; that where there was none of this idolatry, there they still retained the ancient notion and belief of a *future resurrection*.

THIS was the belief of the magian sect so famous over all the East; if we may credit either the ancient or modern history of them. They neither worshipped images, nor men-deities; but retained the doctrine of a resurrection. And we need not wonder at it, if, as their followers amongst the modern Persians say, they derived their religion from Abraham.

ON the other hand, the Greeks, amongst whom this latter superstition had prevailed, seem to have quite lost the notion of a resurrection. There is not the least hint of it in Homer, who is the best authority both for their religious doctrines and customs: but a good deal said of a practice that has been generally held incongruous with it; I mean that of burning the dead bodies at their funerals.

FOR it is observable, that the Greeks and Persians had a different way of sepulture, agreeably to this their different belief. Ο μὲν Ἕλληνες καυσον, οἱ δὲ Πέρσες ἔθαψαν, *The Greeks burn the dead body, the Persians inter it*, says Lucian\*.

THIS last was the most ancient way†; and was used by the Persians, Egyptians, and so (I believe) universally

ticks in the early ages of christianity, mentioned by Justin Martyr, and others, borrowed that opinion of the ascent of the soul immediately to the highest heavens. And it is remarkable of these likewise, that they disbelieved a resurrection.

\* *De Lucretio*, Tom. 2. p. 306. Ed. Blacii.

† So says Tully, (de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 22.) *At mihi quidem antiquissimum sepulture genus id fuisse videtur, quo apud Xenophontem Cyrus nitur. Redditur enim terræ corpus, et ita locatum, ac situm quasi operimento matris obducitur.* He adds that their king Numa was thus interred; and that the Cornelian family had all along used the same custom, down to Sylla, who was the first of them that ordered his body to be burnt; for fear perhaps, (says Tully) that some one might treat his remains as contumeliously as he had done those of Marius.

universally at first, to express their hope of a resurrection. That it was so by the ancient Hebrews we have little room to doubt. And that it is, and ever has been so used by Christians for the same reason, is most certain. Their Heathen persecutors were so persuaded of it, that it was a common practice with them to burn the bodies of Christians, and scatter their ashes into the air, or throw them into a river, that they might thereby frustrate (as they foolishly thought) their hopes of a resurrection.

THIS different custom of burning or interring the dead, as it appears to have proceeded from a different principle, brings to my thoughts a passage in Nehemiah, which seems to give no obscure intimation, that the doctrine of the resurrection was the popular belief of the Jews of those days. The passage is remarkable for the phraseology of it, at least; but whether I shall be able to make the reader see it in the same light wherein it appears to me, is a question. I shall venture to produce it however, and submit it to his judgment.

Neh. iv. ver. 2. Sanballat says scoffingly of the Jews, and their attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, *What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt?*

REVIVING of stones is a very easy metaphor to those who are acquainted with the doctrine of the resurrection; but otherwise not so easy or obvious. The word *וַיְחַיֵּם* *jechajim*, *vivificabunt*, is the very same that is used for raising the dead. *Out of the heaps of rubbish*, is, in the Hebrew, *heaps of dust*, *וַיִּפֹּחַ* *vaphar*, another word often used when speaking of a resurrection. And what follows, *ve-kemmah serupboth*, with an emphasis, *and yet these same stones are burnt*, points out to

*Marius. C. Marii fides Reliquias apud Anienem dissipari jussit Sulla victor — Quid haud scio an timens suo corpori posse accidere, primus e patriciis Corneliis igni voluit cremari. Ibid. p. 160, 161; Edit. Davies.*



us the way of funerals used particularly amongst those who had no belief or expectation of a resurrection.

THE Jews, to this day, charge the poor remnant of the sect of Samaritans, with a disbelief of the *future resurrection*; though on the other hand they deny and disavow the charge. In our Saviour's time, it is highly probable that they believed it; for they worshipped the same God, and had the same expectation of a Messiah, as appears from the Samaritan woman's discourse with Christ, (John iv. 25.) But in the days of Nehemiah, they seem to have been little better than Heathens; a sort of mixed breed out of the scum of many nations. Nehemiah tells them (Ch. ii. 20.) that *they had no right or portion in Jerusalem* being of a different religion from the Jews; and therefore it is highly probable that they disbelieved a resurrection.

Now if Sanballat, in that vein of mirth and buffoonry, which he and his friend Tobiah appear at this time to be in, meant to ridicule this doctrine of the Jewish faith, as well as laugh at their attempt in building; we see a plain reason of that indignation which Nehemiah presently conceived at it, and which drew from him that solemn address to God, ver. 4. *Hear, O our God, for we (thy worshippers) are despised, &c.*

HAD there been no more in Sanballat's speech, than in that of Tobiah which follows; (who with a scorn perhaps more affected than real, says, That a fox, if he were to jump upon it, might break down their stone wall) so wise and good a man as Nehemiah, probably, would have treated it with silence and contempt. But we find that he resented it in another manner; beseeches God to *turn their reproach upon their own head*; speaks of it as a sin or iniquity too great to be forgiven; *for they have provoked thee to anger* (says he) *before the builders*\*; that is, in the most publick manner, and in the face of God's people, had dared to utter their impieties, and ridicule that faith which they professed.

\* Nehem. iv. 5.

THIS seems to me to set the whole in a good light. And here therefore I shall close this section.

## S E C T. XII.

THE dissolution of the world by fire, and the last great and general judgment, are doctrines which we find connected with that of the resurrection in the *New Testament*. If these appear likewise in the *Old Testament*, it will be a further confirmation of the point which I have been endeavouring to make out.

As to the first of them, viz. the dissolution of the world by fire, I think Moses gives us no obscure intimation of it in that song which he composed for the use and instruction of the Israelites, Deut. xxxii. 22. *For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*

In the book of Job, we find the destruction by the deluge and the last general conflagration mentioned together in a speech of Eliphaz, (who seems to be the most learned and knowing of the company, next to Job) Chap. xxii.

As the universal deluge was a most signal and memorable instance of God's displeasure against wickedness and wicked men; this speaker takes occasion to enlarge upon it for five or six verses together, as a proper lesson (so he thought it) for his friend. *Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood, &c.* \* And then closes it with the mention of another destruction by fire, either past or to be expected, which is described to be as general, and as fatal to the wicked. *And the remnant of them the fire consumeth, † or shall consume.*

\* Job xxii. 15, 16.

† Ver. 20. The Hebrew is, *wa-jithr-am acelah est*. Which supposing the preterit, *acelah*, to be turned into a future by the *Vau*, though at a distance (a thing common with this writer) is, *The fire shall consume.*



THIS indeed some refer to the Judgment of God upon Sodom and Gomorra: but it is much more natural to understand it of the last general conflagration. For how could the destroying a little city or two be said, with any propriety, to consume *the remnant*, that is, the whole remainder of wicked men; when at the same time Chaldea, and perhaps the greatest part of the world, was over-run with idolatry? The dissolution of the world by fire, is what St. Peter calls expressly *A day of judgment, and perdition to ungodly men* \*. And this, St. Jude seems to say, was prophesied of by Enoch †, before the Flood; and if so, must be known to Noah, and by him (no doubt) transmitted to posterity. And so might well be known to Job and his friends.

THE righteous Noah and his family, who were so miraculously preserved, are very poetically introduced (Ver. 19.) as triumphing over that wicked generation, whom they had called in vain to repentance; and *who had said unto God, depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them?* (Ver. 17.) defying him, as it were, and contemning both his threatenings and his promises.

VER. 19, 20. *The righteous see it, (that is, see the destruction of this wicked race) and are glad; and the innocent man (naki, sing.) laughs them to scorn. Whereas our substance is not cut down—*

THERE is some difficulty in this clause: The Hebrew is, *im lo nicechad kimanu*, literally, *an non excisa est surrectio nostra?* Is not our rising cut off? Are not we overwhelmed and sunk, never to rise more? Or, *Anon excisa est insurrectio nostra?* Is not our insurrection and rebellion against God, (for so impiety and wickedness is often stiled in Scripture) justly punished by this terrible excision? They seem to be the words of those wicked men who were cut down out of time, (ver. 16.) but here put into the mouth of the innocent Noah and his family by way of derision; as it is common to repeat

\* 2 Pet. iii. 7.

† Jude v. 14.

the words of another, or to make a speech for him upon such occasions, κατὰ μίμνην, (as the Rhetoricians speak) and without naming those whose words they are supposed to be.

THIS gives a good sense to the passage, which is scarce intelligible any other way. And thus it will be the same as if it was said, The innocent mock them, saying, Are not these impious wretches justly punished? Is not our pride, may they say, and insurrection against our maker, sadly humbled by this utter extirpation?

IT follows, *ve-jitbram acelab esb, and the remnant of them the fire shall consume.* Which may be understood as the words of Eliphaz; or, perhaps, as a continuation of the speech of the innocent man Noah. And then it will be, as if he had said, Though this judgment by water, as extensive as it is, may not so thoroughly have purged the world, but that wickedness and wicked men will again spring up, spread widely, and abound: yet know there shall come a time hereafter, when the world shall be consumed by fire. And then the whole race and remainder of wicked men shall be delivered up, once for all, to such an absolute destruction, as that none shall ever spring from their ashes; nor shall the new world and its inhabitants know wickedness, or a defection from God any more. WE see then from this remarkable passage, that the doctrine of the future dissolution of the world by fire (so plainly taught us in the *New Testament*) was not unknown in Job's time, but was, probably, delivered down from Noah. And from hence (no doubt) the notion spread amongst the Heathen.

THE prophet Isaiah seems to handle this subject very copiously in the xxivth and the two following chapters of his prophecy; and uses an expression (Chap. xxvi. 11.) very like to this of Eliphaz in Job. *Aph esb zareca tocelam, the fire of thine enemies (that is, prepared for thine enemies) shall consume them.* Or, if we suppose the *Suffix in tocelam* to be redun-



redundant, as it sometimes happens) *the fire shall consume thine enemies.*

SUCH an expression, I own, may be used in a metaphorical sense; and therefore little stress can be laid upon it, except where the context favours, as here. But it is to be observed, that as the xxivth chapter is taken up with a lively description of that utter dissolution and destruction, which shall be brought upon the earth for the wickedness of its inhabitants; so the two following chapters contain hymns of praise to God on this occasion, both for his judgments on the wicked, and his mercies to the righteous.

I SHALL not enter upon an exposition of these chapters at large; but content myself with a few strictures only, which may be sufficient to our purpose.

THIS great prophet having for ten or twelve chapters together, (by way of introduction as it were) been denouncing God's judgments against particular nations or kingdoms, comes at length to pronounce the final doom upon the earth itself, for its great wickedness, Chap. xxiv.

It begins thus—

VER. 1. *Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.*

AND that we may not think he meant by the earth (*ba-aretz*) the land of Canaan, or any other; (for it must be owned the word is often used in a restrained sense) he expressly calls it the world, *rebel*, ver. 4.

*The earth mourneth and fadeth away; the world languisheth and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish.*

HE proceeds, ver. 5. *The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant.*

If by this be meant the covenant of redemption made in Christ, (which is properly the everlasting covenant) this, it is certain, takes in all mankind, and the whole earth is concerned in it.

IT follows, ver. 6. *Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left:* That is, the few righteous, who having escaped the general corruption, were to regard this period of the conflagration as no other than the day of their redemption.

HENCE it is, that they are exhorted, ver. 15. *Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires, (ba-urim)* an expression worthy of some notice. It follows indeed, *even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.* But this may only intimate, that the inhabitants of the isles, or the Gentile converts to christianity, shall make up the greatest part of those comparatively few righteous, who shall triumph and glorify God in the fires. And this sense seems confirmed by what follows immediately, ver. 16. *From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, (even) glory to the righteous.*

If it be said, that the expression, *Glorify ye the Lord in the fires*, may, probably, mean no more than an exhortation to the Israelites, or Jews, to glorify God in their afflictions; and *in the isles of the sea*, that is, in their several dispersions, or whithersoever they were carried captive; it may still be replied, that even supposing this, yet the allusion to the general dissolution and conflagration of the world is all along kept up so strongly, that we may well conclude it to be a thing well known and believed, and to be, in part at least, here intended by the prophet.

BUT what can we make of the following verses, unless we take them in their plain and obvious sense?

THE prophet had told us, ver. 5. *The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof—therefore hath the curse devoured it—therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned.* And to shew that he meant this of a destruction as universal, as that of the deluge of old; he borrows the very expression from Moses, and tells us, ver. 18. *The windows from on high are open, (to pour down fire, no doubt, upon a wicked world; as be-*

fore,



fore, water,) and the foundations of the earth do shake.

HE proceeds in a strain still more determinate and explicate, ver. 19, 20. *The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro as a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again.*

THERE scarcely needs a comment upon these words. The not rising again, is a remarkable circumstance to our purpose. For, I think, all God's judgments denounced against the land of Israel or Judah, are attended with some distant hope or prospect of a restoration to favour. But here, we see, the earth is to be destroyed, even past redemption.

THE three last verses of the chapter are no less remarkable.

VER. 21. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones on high, (meaning probably the rebel angels) and the kings of the earth upon the earth.*

22. *And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, (or dungeon, the lower Sheol, probably—The words might as well be rendered, and they have been gathered, &c.) and shut up in prison, and after many days shall they be visited; that is, punished—with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power\*.*

IT follows, ver. 23. *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in (the city of the living God, the heavenly) Jerusalem, and before his ancients (or elders so often mentioned in the Revelation) gloriously.*

FROM the brief view that has been given of this chapter, I think it must appear, (unless we can suppose the prophets of God to delight in a vain pomp of words, without any meaning at all answerable to the expression) that a destruction of the earth by fire, for the wickedness of its inhabitants, had a principal share at least in the intention of this prophecy.

\* 2 Thess. i. 9.

IN the hymn that follows, Chap. xxv. there is a noble prediction of the light of the gospel shining throughout the world, and removing from men's eyes, or faces, the vail of ignorance and error that had overspread all nations; and this immediately followed with a display of the grand privilege of the gospel dispensation, a triumph over death, and a joyful eternity to God's faithful people. Ver. 7, 8. *And he will destroy in this mountain, (that is, Mount Zion or Jerusalem, from whence the glad tidings of the gospel were first published) the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory, (or for ever, for so la-netzach rather signifies) and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.*

IN the xxvith chapter is the sentence I have already cited, thus remarkably introduced, ver. 11. *Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people: yea, the fire shall consume thine enemies:* That is, this last judgment shall certainly awaken them, though they refuse to see the hand of God in others.

IT follows, ver. 12. *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us: For thou also hast wrought all our works in us.* Thou hast given us a law to direct us in all our ways and works, and such other gracious advantages as if duly improved, cannot fail to bring us to happiness.

A THING which (as it is intimated in the following verses) no other gods or lords can ever do for their worshippers. We have often been misled, indeed, (says the prophet) to the worship of idols and of false gods, but now we are resolved to adhere strictly to thy worship and service. For thus shall we be entituled to a happy resurrection: while the gods of the Heathen, together with their impious worshippers, shall sink into destruction——

FOR here comes in that remarkable passage, which I have taken notice of, and explained in a former section,



tion; where the great distinction that shall be made at the general resurrection betwixt God's faithful people, who shall rise to joy and happiness; and the *rephaim* or wicked, who shall be cast forth into perdition, is set before them by this great prophet, in a language which they very well understood, (Chap. xxvi. Ver. 13.—to the end.) *O Lord our God, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only shall we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they will not live; they are rephaim (manes, or ghosts of mighty wicked men) they shall not rise—&c.* See above section 8. And what has been here offered, may serve as a further confirmation of the exposition there given to this passage.

THOUGH I have been somewhat large in considering these chapters, (which their importance however may well excuse) I must take leave to mention one or two places more, where this doctrine of the world's dissolution appears plainly to be delivered.

As Isaiah li. 6. *For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment: and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: But my salvation (says God) shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.*

HERE we see is an end put to the rage of men at once, and their habitation; and described in much the same terms as the dissolution of the world in the *New Testament*. And God's righteousness and salvation therefore, which is to be for ever, must mean his bestowing the rewards of everlasting life on his faithful servants.

So Psalm cii. 25. *Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea all of them shall wax old as a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.*

HERE the psalmist goes one step further than the prophet; and not only acquaints us, that the heavens and the earth shall wax old as a garment, but like a worn out garment shall be changed for new. What  
but

but the new heavens and new earth mentioned by St. Peter in the *New Testament*, and said to be the *expectation of believers according to God's promise* \*.

Mons. Le Clerc, in his commentary upon this psalm, says, 'It is strange that the Hebrews, who appear to have been well acquainted with the dissolution of the world, and to speak of it without ambiguity—should nevertheless say nothing of the state of souls, the last judgment, and the consequent rewards and punishments; at least, nothing but what is ambiguous †.'

It is well that he allows us this doctrine however, which has such an affinity with the other of a general judgment. And had he examined the holy Scriptures without prejudice, he might have found the other doctrines likewise, perhaps, expressed in terms of as little ambiguity.

As for the doctrine of a future general judgment, I shall wave the texts that might be produced from the prophets, (several of which are either cited, or alluded to, by our blessed Saviour in the Gospels, as I have observed elsewhere ‡) and insist particularly on that of Solomon, at the conclusion of his book of Ecclesiastes; where, when he tells us, *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing*, &c. we must of necessity understand him of a future judgment; unless we will make him contradict himself, and render the whole scope and design of the book unintelligible.

It is to be observed, that he here gives us the result of all his vain researches; and the fixed principle to which he was led at last, and which he was re-

\* 2 Pet. iii. 13.

† *Mirum est Hebræis notam fuisse παντασθεν illam omnium rerum, ita ut non ambigue de ea loquantur, ut & philosophi qui eam crediderunt, ut Platonici & Stoici; nec tamen quidquam dici de statu animarum, deque ultimo judicio, & præmiis ac penis quæ sequuntur; coram quod non sit ambiguum.*

‡ See p. 3. Sec. 10.



solved to rest in, after all his wandrings and perplexities.

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter,* (says he) *Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole* (or the all) *of man*: that is, the all he has to trust to, his great concern, his only way to happiness.

It follows—— *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

It is strange to see Le Clerc puzzle at this plain sentence, and absurdly interpret it at last of God's judging things in this world. This (sure) can never be Solomon's meaning, who so often declares the contrary in this book, viz. That God does not judge men here according to their deeds, but that there is *one event to the righteous and the wicked*. If God then be at all the judge of mankind, and if he shall bring every work into judgment, every the most secret action, whether good or bad; is it possible any other can be meant, than a future day of judgment?

Solomon says, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter*. Le Clerc will not have this to mean the result or scope of the foregoing reasonings. For the scope of the book, (says he) *is to shew the vanity of all human things, and so to beget a contempt of them in the minds of his readers*.

BUT what advantage can it be, to know that the things of this world are vain, unless there remained some better prospect for us? Or, how should we arrive at a contempt of them, but by comparing them with something more truly valuable.

This therefore which he calls the scope of the book, is in reality only the medium, which the author makes use of, to bring about his conclusion,

*\* Non est tamen hæc, si bene rem pensaverimus, collectio e doctrina hujus opusculi, quasi scopus libri hic esset. — Scopus enim est, ostendere iniquitatem omnium rerum humanarum, earumque proinde desipientiam in lectorem animis gignere.* Le Clerc in loc.

viz.

viz. that the fear of God, and the observance of his laws, is the proper business of a man in this world, and his only way to happiness : and that because there shall certainly come a time hereafter, when the great Judge of the world shall call men to account for their behaviour, and reward or punish them accordingly.

No, but (says he) ‘ Solomon adds this sentence, to shew, that he meant after all that God’s laws should ‘ be observed ’ \*.

He meant so, no doubt, but still what possible inducement could there be to observe the divine laws, if things were left to run at random here, and no future account to be undergone ? What sense can there be in reasoning thus ? There is a vanity in all earthly things— One instance of their vanity, amongst others, is this, that *no man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him : For there is one event to the righteous and the wicked*†. Nay, to man and beast. For *that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth the beasts, even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other* ‡. Therefore you must fear God and keep his commandments.

TAKE what follows, and take it in its true light, For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, &c. and every thing is apt and proper, and the reasoning strong. As thus— Since there is such a vanity in the things of this world, and all the transactions of it, and God is pleased to suffer so much injustice, oppression, and confusion to prevail here ; assure yourself that there must, and will be, a future day of judgment, when the great Lord and ruler of the world will set every thing to rights, and reward or punish men as they have obeyed or disobeyed his laws—— To fear him therefore, and keep his com-

\* *Quare addit, se nibilo fecius rem ita intelligere ut divine leges observentur. Ibid.*

† Eccles. ix. 2.

‡ Eccles. iii. 19.



mandments, is the principal thing you have to do in this world.

BUT take it the other way, and it runs thus—*Fear God, and keep his commandments*; for you are to believe that God will bring every work into judgment here in this world, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil: though I have told you before, and your own eye-sight and experience may convince you, that it is otherwise.

WHAT any one can propose by interpreting things in this way, and throwing the sentiments and reasonings of a writer into a heap of inconsistency, I know not.

BUT perhaps it will be said, that there is something more in what Le Clerc offers upon this text; for he tells us that the wise man meant it ‘of a judgment in this life, where God punishes the impenitently wicked either in their persons or posterity, as the law of Moses teaches \*’.

As if men of profligate lives and manners had any great regard for posterity: or as if it was not often seen, that they who have no children or posterity at all are the greatest villains.

BUT even this too he retracts, and comments away very soon. Neither † (says he) ‘is this to be understood, as if Solomon believed that this was always done by God (or that he always punished in this manner) for he had often seen the contrary: but with this exception, unless God for particular reasons, saw fit to do otherwise. An exception, (says he) which no one could abuse, since none knew what God had determined concerning his deeds.’

\* Intelligitur hujus vite judicium, quo penas sumit de malis impientibus, sive in ipsis, sive in eorum posteris, ut lex Moysi docet. Le Clerc in Ec. 12, 14.

† Nec tamen hoc ita capiendum, quasi semper a Deo hoc fieri crederet Solomon cum contrarium sæpe vidisset; sed cum hac exceptione, nisi Deo, singularibus de rationibus, aliter videatur; quã nullus poterat abusi, cum nemo sciret, quid de factis suis statuisset Deus.

Is not this making Solomon to reason just as I observed before? 'You are to fear God and keep his commandments, for you are to believe, that God will bring every work into judgment here in this world; though he may act otherwise if he please, and you and I see plainly, from a thousand instances, that he does act otherwise.' Is this an argument becoming the pen of the wisest of men?

BUT this is not the only place, where Solomon mentions, or must be understood of a *future judgment*. His reasoning (Ch. iii. 16, 17.) is very strong and clear to this purpose; where, from the iniquity that sometimes prevails in the courts of justice amongst men, he infers that there shall come a time hereafter when God shall judge the world, and right and equity take place. *Moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.*

BUT when, or where? In this world? No, the very means which God hath established for distributing justice to men here, is we see, according to this account, entirely perverted and abused. For what justice can be properly administer'd where the courts of justice are corrupted?

SINCE men then will not do what is just, it follows that God shall and will, says Solomon. For as the supreme Judge of all, it concerns him to correct the errors and wrong judgments of inferior judges here: and therefore there shall certainly come a time hereafter when he will take the matter into his own hand, and distribute justice equally and impartially both to the righteous and the wicked.

AND to prevent all possible mistakes, as if he meant it of a judgment in this world, the wise Man adds immediately, \* *For there is a time there, for every purpose, and for every work* †. There——Where?

D d 3

Why

\* Eccles. iii. 17.

† The Hebrew is, *ei yet le-col chepetz veyal col mayaseh sham*. Which, perhaps, might be rendered thus—*Nam opportunitas omni desiderio*



Why under the sun; that is, in this world. A time for what? *For every purpose.* (Hebrew, *le-col chepetz*, *omni voluntati*, for every wish or desire,) and *for every work*, as well such as are wicked and unjust, as those that are right and good. Men are permitted, generally speaking, to do what they please in this world without controul. And hence those frequent instances of injustice and oppression, irregularity and confusion; in short, so great a mixture of the evil with the good—— This therefore can never be the season for strict impartial justice, such as the nature and the will of God requires.

BUT when are we to expect this season then? Why, if Solomon does not point out the precise time to us, we need not think it strange; since it is what the angels themselves are ignorant of. But that it shall be in some grand future period within the circle of eternity, is what he plainly intimates to us, at ver. 11. of this chapter. And tells us that whenever that shall come, it will then appear with the utmost clearness that all the works of God are beautiful in their season; and that even the irregularities, and confusion, which prevail so much in this world, are suffered for very wise and gracious purposes, and all contribute to the great designs of Providence, which at present must needs appear intricate to us, because we cannot trace them from the beginning to the end.

*I have seen the travel (says he) that God hath given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it.*

*He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: Also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.*

*fiderio (hic) et super omne opus ibi.* Here is an opportunity for every wish, or of doing what men please; but there (or then, when God shall judge) there must be an account rendered for every work.

• Eccles. iii. 10, 11.

*He hath set the world in their heart.* What can this dark phrase mean? The word (עולם) *olam* here translated the world, most commonly signifies eternity, or an indefinite space of time at least— And to set this in their heart, is (I suppose) to give them an idea or conception of it. God then (says the wise man) hath given men an idea of eternity, that they may not presume to judge of the ways of his providence by short-sighted and imperfect views, or vainly hope to comprehend them from the beginning to the end; but may rest satisfied, that every thing is beautiful in its season or its proper place, and the whole scheme together admirably perfect and harmonious.

THIS sense of the passage is further confirmed by what follows at ver. 14. *I know that every thing that God does it shall be, le-olam, for ever, or for eternity; nothing can be added to it, nor taken from it, that man may fear before him.*

FEAR what? Certainly something that may happen to them in this eternity; to which all God's works have a respect. The works of his providence in particular, (which seem to be here chiefly meant) and which are all of them so perfect, that nothing can be added to them or taken from them: that is, considering the whole scheme of Providence together, and as all the several parts of it bear relation to eternity. So that what may seem less perfect; or even irregular at present, will be found at length to have been so managed by the divine Wisdom, as upon the whole to be the best, the most beautiful, and most perfect, that could possibly be.

COULD one who reasoned thus, be at a loss to find a time for justice and for judgment; though it be not (as he saw plainly that it was not) executed in this world?

AND yet Le Clerc, according to custom, explains away this only true and obvious sense of the passage with saying, as to *God's judging the righteous and the wicked*, *Sunt hæc de absolutione innocentis, et damnatione nocentis in hac vita, altero quidem servato, altero*



altero vero punito, intelligenda\*. That *this is to be understood of God's absolving the innocent, and condemning the guilty here in this life, by preserving the one, and punishing the other.* As if the meaning had been, that let justice be never so much perverted amongst men, the innocent condemned, and the guilty acquitted; yet God will not suffer this unrighteous sentence to be executed, but will save the innocent, and punish the guilty. Is this his meaning? Or had he any meaning at all? If it were his, it could never be Solomon's; who if he had observed such a thing, would not have said, *God shall judge (jishpot) but God doth judge the righteous and the wicked.*

BUT all the reason which Le Clerc gives for these perverse interpretations, (and it is what he often repeats) is, that the doctrine of the 'last or general judgment, which was at length revealed in the Gospel, was not known in those days. If it had, a thing so useful and so necessary, would not have been mentioned by Solomon so ambiguously, or so 'lightly touched' †.

BUT suppose the doctrine was not so clearly revealed, nor the proceedings of the day of judgment so circumstantially described under the Old Testament as the New; yet they might believe a future general judgment nevertheless.

BUT it is this commentator's usual way, to evade plain texts of Scripture, by saying that they ought to be plainer; and yet where he offers at another exposition of them, scarce any thing can appear more plain than his being in the wrong.

It is (I think) no small advantage to us in the present question, that the notion of a future general judgment is very natural, and very credible; evident-

\* Comm. in loc.

† Nondum enim iis temporibus notum erat extremum illud iudicium, quod in Evangelio demum revelatum. Alioqui rem tam utilem, aut potius tam necessariam tam ambigue non expressisset Solomon, neque tam breviter attigisset, neque de immortalitate animi dubitasse se ostendisset. Le Clerc in Ec. 3. 17.

ly deducible from the course of things in this world, considered with relation to the Great Lord and Ruler of the world; and which therefore the Hebrews, as well as others, might deduce, and reason themselves into some expectation of; unless they lived in another sort of a world than we do; which does not appear (I am sure) from the description Solomon gives us of it in this book of Ecclesiastes. Why then should we deny the Wise Man the little skill that is required to form so obvious a conclusion, as that which results from what he here observes himself, of the great perversion of justice amongst men, *viz.* That since men will not do justice, God will; and since it is not done in this life, it must be in some future state. *I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.*

I CAN think but of two conclusions possible to be drawn from this great irregularity here mentioned. And it is remarkable, that they both occurred to the Wise Man's thoughts, as he was meditating upon this subject. The first, and the true one, is that God will judge the world, and make a just distinction, at the length, betwixt the righteous and the wicked. The other is a conclusion directly opposite: that perhaps mankind, after all, is a creature below the care and notice of the Deity—— That men in reality are no better than the brutes; and therefore may be suffered, like these, to prey upon one another here, without any fear or danger of being called to account for it hereafter. This notion is very elegantly expressed in the following verses of this chapter.

VER. 18. *I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.*

THAT is, I thought within myself, that perhaps the reason why God is pleased to suffer so much injustice to prevail in this world, was to humble men in their own conceits, and to let them see, that they were no better in their nature, or in his esteem,



esteem, than the brute beasts who have no understanding.

19. *For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity.*

20. *All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.*

21. *Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth.*

AND if this be so, the advice of the epicure, *Let us eat and drink and enjoy ourselves, without troubling our heads with any foolish notions of right and wrong,* may seem to have some reason in it, as it follows.

VER. 22. *Wherefore I perceive, (raithi, I saw, or perceived) that according to this hypothesis, there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his own works; (should push at making his own fortune, and get as much of the world and its enjoyments as he can reach at, by all ways and means) for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?*

HERE the Wise Man lets the argument to rest; having fairly stated the consequence arising from the premises both on the one side, and the other—but with this remarkable difference, that the first is the conclusion of the man of reason, evidently and strongly following from our notion of the justice of God, and the injustice that prevails in this world. The other is—What shall I call it? a giddy dream or delirium of the sensualist; who, through a habit of debasing his understanding, and subjecting it to his brutish appetites, has brought himself to believe and think, just as far as he can see. And because he sees that men die, as well as beasts; and does not see how the spirits of the one, and of the other, are disposed of after death; he concludes, that men  
and

and beasts are in all respects upon a level; equally neglected by Almighty God, and that there is no pre-eminence of the one above the other. And if men can thus easily persuade themselves that they are no better than the brutes; it is no wonder if they forget to think, and reason like men.

BUT it will be said, perhaps, that all this is little to the purpose; for it is only reasoning about a *future judgment*, and deducing it as a probable conclusion. We want to have it proved to be delivered in the Old Testament as a point of revelation.

I ANSWER, That it is such reasoning, however, as can neither be answered, nor evaded; such as all must feel the force of, who have their eyes open to see any thing of the usual transactions of this world; and their understandings so far enlightened, as to believe that there is a God that made and governs it. And if it appears thus plainly, that Solomon believed a *future judgment*; or that his people, instructed by his writings, did the same: I conceive it can be no disparagement either to his belief or theirs, that he was able to give, and they to apprehend the moral demonstration of it.

NEVERTHELESS, in the text which I have pitched upon as decisive to our purpose, I must observe, that the Wise Man lays down this doctrine in a more dogmatical way, and, to all appearance, as a point of revelation. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, &c.*

It is natural to suppose, that Solomon, after all his own perplexed reasonings, would rest himself at last upon some *revealed truth*. And that this was such, the *apparatus* to it in the foregoing verses evidently shews.

*The words of the wise* (says he) *are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd\**; meaning God.

And further, (says he) *my son, by these be admonished; of making many books there is no end, and much study†* (or reading) *is a weariness of the flesh.*

\* Eccles. xii. 11.

† Eccles. xii. 12.



AND then comes his conclusion—*Fear God, and keep his commandments—for God shall bring every work into judgment, &c.* †.

Now why should he intimate to us, that the words of the wise, which are so forcible and pungent, receive their power chiefly by coming from the one great shepherd and instructor, God? Or, why should he speak so disparagingly of many books, and much reading; unless the sentence which follows, and which he meant to recommend in preference to it, had the authority of God to give it weight, and was indeed a point of revelation.

AND if it be so, let us examine it again a little without prejudice; and consider, whether a future general judgment can be described in words more plain, or more emphatical. *Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the All of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

AND here I shall conclude this argument.

### S E C T. XIII.

I MIGHT seem to have wandered from my subject in the foregoing sections, were not the antiquity of the doctrine of a future state among the Jews or Hebrews a point of some importance to the clearing up the antiquity of the book of Job, as well as fixing the sense of that celebrated text, wherein the doctrine is delivered so expressly, that I am persuaded nothing could have hindered those who understood the language from perceiving it, but an unreasonable prejudice, as if it was not known or believed amongst the Jews, with whom this book was received as canonical, or not so early as the book seems to bear date.

BUT let us now return to our first subject. And to make some amends to the delicate reader for the

many dry and disagreeable things that must have occurred to him in a course of controversy and criticism upon words and phrases; let us take a review of the several characters pourtrayed in this sacred and sublime poem, and see what good instructions may be drawn from each.

THE three friends of Job, though they all agree in persecuting him, yet differ somewhat in their characters. The speeches of Eliphaz appear artful and insinuating; those of Bildad, grave and mild: of Zophar, fierce and violent. The two former had observed some *decorum* in their reprehensions of Job; but the zeal of this last transports him beyond all bounds.

CHAP. XI. 1, 2, &c. *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,*

*Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be justified?*

*Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?*

— *O that God would speak and open his lips against thee.*

— *Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.*

STRANGE rashness and presumption! thus to pronounce upon a point, of which he could not possibly be a judge. But it happened here, as usual; that this speaker, who set out with the greatest heat, is the first whose arguments are spent; for after this vehement speech, he makes but one reply, and it is over with him.

FROM each of the other we have three speeches; and the last weak effort is made by Bildad, Ch. xxv. where finding themselves quite baffled in their purpose, which was to make Job confess himself guilty of some enormous crimes, which they rashly supposed to have drawn down this heavy judgment upon him; instead of ingenuously owning themselves in the wrong, which (if one may guess from the usual issue of disputes) is one of the hardest things in the world; this



this grave antagonist satisfies himself with an evasive answer to this purpose, viz. That no man, strictly speaking, can be justified before God; man being at best a frail and fallible creature, and God a Being of infinite purity and perfection. Which is an argument that concerned Job no more than themselves, but must involve them all without distinction in the same class of sinners.

It is certain, nothing could be more untoward than this conduct of Job's friends; to bring a charge against him, which they could not prove, and from which his well-known virtue, and the integrity of his life, ought to have screened him. But though Job very plainly shews them the injustice and inhumanity of this procedure; nay, though he confutes them so far, that they had nothing further to reply; yet like our modern disputants, they stood out to the last; and had not the grace to own their mistake, till God himself was pleased to thunder it in their ears— Here then we have a lively instance of the force of prejudice and prepossession.

THE character of Job, on the other hand, affords us such a spectacle, as Seneca (alluding to the shews of gladiators so common amongst the Romans) says, was worthy of the deity himself, to look upon, viz. that of a pious and good man combating adversity\*; and, amongst other miseries of an extraordinary kind, vexed with the unjust suspicions, and the peevish accusations of his mistaken friends.

AND here we find him using every argument that could be thought of, in his own defence; to cure them, if possible, of their mistake, and to persuade them of his innocence. Appealing to the general course of providence, which for the most part deals out things promiscuously, and oftentimes involves the good and bad in the same common calamity— directing them to instances within their own knowledge of such who had been as wicked as they were great,

\* *Vir fortis cum mala fortuna compositus*——

and yet had lived a long course of years in prosperity, and died at last in peace, and been buried with great pomp; so that no visible judgment had overtaken them, in their lives or in their deaths.

WHEN this view of providence so true and evident to experience, still wanted force to remove an obstinate error, he puts them in mind of the *future judgment*, which was the proper season for reward and punishment; and declares, in the most solemn manner, his hopes of being acquitted there.

WHEN all this would not do, but they still disbelieve and persecute him; he is driven to the last argument which a modest man would make use of, and appeals to his own publick and private behaviour in the whole course of his life: and upon this occasion displays such a set of admirable virtues; shews the piety, the prudence, the humanity of his conduct, in so amiable a light, with such a noble freedom, and at the same time such an air of truth, that I question whether there be any thing of the kind more beautiful or instructive in all antiquity; and perhaps a finer picture of a wise and good man was never drawn. How prudent and upright in his decisions, as a magistrate or judge! How just and benevolent in his domestic character, as a father of a family! How untractable to all the allurements of pleasure in the height of his prosperity! And how sensible to the complaints and miseries of others! And above all; how remarkably pious in his principles, how careful to build his virtue upon its only solid basis, religion or the fear of God! If I were to produce the proofs of this, I must transcribe the whole *xxixth* and *xxxist* chapters.

BUT with all these excellent qualities, we cannot but take notice of some little mixture of alloy and imperfection. For a perfect character, however it may have existed in idea, it is certain never yet appeared above once upon the real stage of the world.

WE must forgive this good man therefore the little excursions and passionate complaints, which the extremity



tremity of his sufferings now and then forced from him: his despair, and weariness of life; his often wishing for death; his eagerness to come upon his trial; his earnest requests and even expostulations with his judge, to bring him to it; or to acquaint him with the reasons, at least, of these severe inflictions. These, and the like, it must be owned, appear as shades and blemishes in the character of this great man; and may argue somewhat of impatience even in this heroic pattern of patience.

A GREAT deal, however, might be said in his excuse: as that his afflictions had something in them very astonishing, and beyond the common measure; that the distempers of the body have oftentimes a natural tendency to produce black thoughts, and a despondency of mind; to which may be added, that the rash censures and suspicions of his friends, as they affected his reputation, which to a generous mind is the most valuable thing in the world next to his integrity; it is no wonder, that a treatment so inhuman, so undeserved, so unexpected, should provoke to an extremity a person born down already with the weight of his misfortunes.

I SAY, these things might be offered in excuse for the little blemishes which appear in the speeches and conduct of this great man. But after all, the best thing that can be pleaded in his behalf, and that which covers all his imperfections, is his own behaviour upon this occasion, and his making no excuse at all for them; but as soon as ever he was brought to recollect his errors, immediately confessing them with great simplicity, and the most profound humility and contrition—— Chap. xl. 3, 4. *Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth——* And again, Chap. xlii. 3, &c. *I have uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me which I knew not—— But now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

THE easiness and favour, with which this humble acknowledgment was accepted by the supreme judge; and the bountiful reward bestowed upon this good man, as a present earnest of a still greater to be expected by him hereafter, will teach us this very acceptable and important truth : how ready God is to pass by the little weaknesses of human nature, where there is a tried and resolute integrity, still bent upon the doing of his duty, and determined, whatever may befall him, to adhere to God in all his trials and temptations.

BUT thus much for the character of Job—— who, in this divine poem, like the chief figure in a history-piece of painting, stands the brightest and foremost to our observation.

THERE is still one character behind, which we must not overlook, I mean that of Elihu ; who had been all the while very attentive to this debate betwixt Job and his friends, and utters not a word till both sides had done speaking ; and then shews, that a stander-by, though of less abilities and penetration, may sometimes see further into a dispute, than they who are eagerly engaged therein, and, by having their passions raised to an undue height, are very apt to carry things to an extreme, on the one hand and on the other.

THIS useful moral presents itself to us in the strongest light, from the description here given of Elihu as a young man, of little knowledge and experience in comparison of the other speakers famous for wisdom, and venerable for their years.

THE apology he makes for himself is this, that he would not presume to interpose in the debate, till they who were his elders, had done speaking— *I said, days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom* \*. But however, as God giveth to every one their share of understanding, and as he then found in himself a strong impulse to speak, he would de-

\* Chap. xxxii. 7.



liver his opinion with all freedom, and without flattery, or a partial inclination to either side—— *Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man, &c.* †.

THE substance of his speech is this—— That it was a great fault and folly in the three friends, to charge Job with supposed crimes, upon his denial, whereof they had nothing more to say, no evidence to produce in support of their accusation.

ON the other hand, he blames Job for some intemperate expressions he had used, and for the manner of his defence which he thought liable to great exception—— That while he pleaded his innocence so much, and called so earnestly upon God to bring him to his trial, he did not well consider the infinite distance betwixt God and man; that his own unerring wisdom was the sole guide of his actions, and that he was not obliged to give account of them to any of his creatures—— *Behold, in this thou art not just; I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*

*Why dost thou strive against him? For he giveth not account of any of his matters ‡.*

HE proceeds to observe, that though God be thus high, yet he condescends to instruct men by the secret whispers of his grace, and sometimes by extraordinary dreams and visions, sometimes by afflictions; that he may withdraw him from such courses as are sinful and mischievous, and bring him to an humble dependance on himself. *That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man\*.*

HE adds, that Job's so strongly insisting on his innocence, and at the same time complaining that God had *taken away his judgment †*; because he did not presently bring him to his trial, and clear him before his friends and all the world; was putting an argument in the mouth of wicked men, to say that God had dealt unjustly by him. And upon this conduct

† Ver. 21.

‡ Chap. xxxiii. 12, 13.

\* Chap. xxxiii. 17.

† Chap. xxxiv. 5.

of Job he is very severe— calls it a *drinking up scorning like water*— a going in company with the workers of iniquity; and saying, *It profiteth a man nothing that he shall delight himself with God †.*

WHEREAS this, as he proceeds, ought to be laid down for a most certain truth, that as God is Almighty, it is impossible he can do wrong; and therefore he must render to every man according to his ways— *Far be it from God that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity.*

*For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.*

*Yea surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment ||.*

HE repeats it over and over as a thing unquestionable, and what ought to be laid down as a first principle in the controversy before them, that God cannot do wrong— And indeed the evidence of it is as clear as the light. For all temptation to do wrong must proceed from some want or weakness. Men sin, because they have some irregular appetite to gratify, or something wanting to their ease and happiness, which they hope by this means to supply. But nothing of this kind can be said of God. Omnipotence is subject to no want or weakness, and therefore cannot possibly be tempted to do evil.

HE proceeds further, to shew him the reasonableness of submitting to God's dispensations whatsoever they be; since we pay a reverence to the authority of earthly princes, whose commands nevertheless, and whose decisions are far from being always equitable or right— *Shall he that bateth right govern? And wilt thou condemn him that is most just?*

*Is it fit to say to a king, thou art wicked? And to princes, ye are ungodly? \**

HE further intimates to him, that though he had endeavoured to live never so exactly, yet it might become him upon this occasion, when he lay under so

† Ver. 7, 8, 9.

|| Ver. 10, 11, 12.

\* Chap. xxxiv. 17, 18.



severe a discipline, rather to suspect himself, than murmur against God; with all humility to confess the errors he was conscious of, and to beg that God would reveal to him his other sins, that might have escaped his own knowledge or remembrance.

*Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have born chastisement, I will not offend any more.*

*That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.*

BUT here he seems to have forgotten that Job had been beforehand in making that confession he exhorts him to; as Ch. vii. 20. *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men?* And again, Ch. xiii. 23. *How many are mine iniquities and sins! Make me to know my transgression and my sin.*

BUT this is not the only instance, where Elihu's memory fails him in what relates to Job.

NOT to be tedious in the account of this speech; he proceeds in the following chapters to set forth God's omnipotence in the strongest colours he was able; and concludes with an observation very applicable to the subject of dispute before them, that God and his ways are incomprehensible by us; that nevertheless as he is infinitely powerful and just, we are to conclude that he never sends affliction without cause; and that our duty therefore is to fear him, and to submit implicitly to his will: for that all human wisdom is nothing in respect of his—

*Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice; he will not afflict.*

*Men do therefore fear him; he respecteth not any that are wise in heart\*.*

UPON the whole, as this speaker performs the part of a moderator, he seems to have observed the errors on both sides, and to have hit upon the point where the controversy ought to rest, viz. in the unsearchable depth of the divine wisdom: with

† Ver. 31, 32.

\* Chap. xxxvii. 23, 24.

a persuasion, that God, who is acknowledged on all hands to be infinitely powerful and just, will certainly find a way to clear up all the irregularities (as they now appear to us) in the methods of his providence; and bring this intricate and perplexed scene at last to a beautiful and regular close.

THE great fault of the speech is this, that he bears too hard upon poor Job: and his reproofs, though there was some ground for them, are nevertheless too harsh and severe. Nay, what is very provoking, where he endeavours to repeat what Job had said, he gives it for the most part a wrong turn, or sets it in some very disadvantageous light.

THE silence of this good man therefore during this long speech of Elihu, may be considered as none of the least instances of his patience. But as he was convinced, that one part of the charge brought against him was but too true, *viz.* that he had been now and then too hasty and intemperate in his expressions; he was resolved not to encrease the fault by entering into the controversy anew; but by his silence and attention here, and suffering his passions to subside, was the better prepared to receive the following speech with that profound humility, and that absolute submission which became him.

CHAP. xxxviii. 1. *Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said—*

I HAVE observed, that the Chaldee Paraphrast, by the addition of a word, hath given a very bold exposition of this text, thus— ‘Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind of grief, &c.’ taking the word (רָעָם) whirlwind, not in a literal, but metaphorical sense. As if the meaning were only this; that, amidst the tumult of Job’s sorrows, God suggested to him the following thoughts, to bring him to a sense of his condition.

BUT the generality of expositors agree to understand it of a sensible and miraculous interposition of the Deity, appearing in a cloud the symbol of his



presence, or by an angel speaking in his name (says Grotius) to put an end to the controversy.

It is, perhaps, of no great moment to inquire into the manner of the revelation. If we allow the speech to be divine; its authority will be the same, whichever way we suppose it to have been impressed on Job. It is certain, God, who formed our minds, can enlighten them to what degree he please. And whenever he inspired his prophets or holy men in an extraordinary way, with an intent of conveying through their hands some useful truths to mankind; there can be no doubt, but that they had, some how or other, a certainty of the inspiration; and perhaps as clear a perception of the things suggested, as if they had been delivered to them by an audible and external voice.

BUT whatever were the way of communicating it, if it be possible to discover the divinity or inspiration of a thing by its own light, I think, we cannot hesitate to pronounce this speech to be divine.

THE subject of it is God's omnipotence, as displayed in the works of the creation.

MANY are the pens that have adorned this noble argument. Philosophers, Poets and Divines have laid out all their eloquence upon it, and seem raised above themselves whenever they have been led to touch upon this agreeable topic. But as the holy Scriptures far surpass all human compositions in those sublime descriptions which they give us of the majesty of God, and the wisdom and magnificence of his works: so (if we may be allowed to make the comparison) it will be difficult to find any thing in the sacred writings themselves that comes up to this speech. The English reader will be sensible of something in it, that must raise his admiration to the highest pitch. For there is no veil that can hide its beauties. Turn it into what language you please, and it will shine through them all.

*Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*

*Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.*

*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare if thou hast understanding?*

*Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

*Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner-stone thereof?*

*When the morning-stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*

*Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb?*

*When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it:*

*And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,*

*And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed\*.*

IT proceeds all along in this majestic strain. And every step that we advance, there is still presented to the imagination something new, and something great and wonderful.

THE descriptions scattered here and there are pictures drawn in such a lively manner, and withal so just, that they might instruct a Phidias, or a Raphael.

BUT what is most observable in this speech, as it gives a life and energy to the whole, is the distribution of it for the most part into short questions falling thick upon each other, and darting conviction, each like a flash of lightning, with a suddenness and force impossible to be resisted.

*Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days? And caused the day-spring to know his place?*

*Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the abyss?*



*Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?*

*Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?*

*Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?*

*Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are? \**

THE turn of this last verse is to me surprising, I think, beyond any thing I ever met with—How strong the image! How simple the expression! We read of winged lightnings in the heathen poets; but where do they live, and act, and speak, and wait for orders with impatience, as here?

IT still goes on in the same questioning and convincing way.

*Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or given understanding to the heart?*

*Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God—*

*Who hath sent out the wild ass free?*

*He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.*

*The range of the mountains is his pasture—*

*Canst thou bind the rhinoceros with his band in the furrow? Or will he harrow the valleys after thee?*

*Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? Or wings and feathers to the ostrich?*

*Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?—*

*Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?*

*Doth the eagle mount up at thy command? †*

THE force and beauty of these passages is much more easily felt, than described. This is that sort of eloquence which subdues the mind by violence; and of which old Homer (whose exquisite judgment few things

\* Chap. xxxviii. v. 12, 16, 17, 33, 34, 35.

† Chap. xxxviii. v. 36, 41. Chap. xxxix. v. 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 19, 26, 27.

could escape) appears to have had some notion; for he was willing to bestow it, as the highest accomplishment of the kind, upon his favourite heroe Ulysses; whose speech he compares to a driving winter-storm of snow or hail, that bears down all before it.

Αλλ' ὅτε δὴ ρ' ὅπα τε μεγάλην ἐκ γήθεος ἱεῖ

Καὶ ἔπεα νιφάδεσσεν εὐκλότα χειμερινῶν,

Οἷον ἂν ἔπειτ' Οὐδυσσῆϊ γ' ἐρίσειε βρότος ἄλλος †.

THE comparison shews him to have hit the idea; but what would he have given to have seen it exemplified, as it is here?

BUT after all, what most concerns us is the application which is made of this divine oratory: which is, to humble the pride of man\*, and shew him his own weakness and folly. That he who lives from day to day, by the mere bounty of his maker, and may lift up his voice to the clouds, but cannot command so much as a drop of rain, till God is pleased to give it him in his season, should yet presume to direct him how to govern the world, and tell him when it is a proper season for him either to punish the wicked, or reward the good.

*Wilt thou also disavow my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?*

† Iliad. γ. 221.

\* There is one thing in this speech that looks as if it were intended to humble the pride of the learned. I mean, the pompous description of the Behemoth and Leviathan, with which it concludes. Our translators did well to retain the Hebrew names of these creatures. The different opinions of the commentators, and the difficulty which they find in applying the characters to any one known animal, so as to make it answer to every part of the description, might induce one to believe, that there is some mystery intended beyond what appears in the letter.

But however this be; there is one good use (to be sure) that may be made of this, and the like difficult places of Scripture. They will teach us to know our own mediocrity: that we must not hope to understand every thing in the word of God, any more than in his works.

*Hast*



*Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?*

*Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, and array thyself with glory and beauty.*

*Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; and behold every one that is proud and abase him—*

*Then will I also confess unto thee, that thine own right-hand can save thee †.*

I AM the less solicitous for the extracts here produced, because where every thing is so excellent, there is little need of being exact or curious in the choice. The whole speech has in it an amazing grandeur and sublimity; admirably fitted to create in us an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and a lowly opinion of ourselves, our own wisdom and abilities; and thereby engage us to that humble dependance on our Maker; that conformity to, and complacency in his will, whatever it be, which is suited to our nature and our state; and will be found in all occurrences of life our best support and highest wisdom, at once our duty and our happiness.

#### S E C T. XIV.

**A**FTER taking a general view of the poem in the foregoing section, I shall beg leave, by way of conclusion, to point the reader's attention to a single chapter, which is none of the least beautiful or instructive parts of this divine work; I might add perhaps nor the least obscure. I mean Chap. xx. viii. the subject whereof is an enquiry after wisdom—not the wisdom of God, meaning the unfearchable depth of his counsels, (as some commentators understand it) but wisdom in the general; or rather, the wisdom proper to man; which therefore in the last verse, as the result of the enquiry, is told us what it is.

THE chapter begins with a fine description of the indefatigable industry and ardour of mankind in

† Chap. xl. Ver, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14.

searching after other things, which contribute either to the uses or the ornament of life. How they dig into the bowels of the earth for metals, gold, silver, iron, brass \*. And though the great Creator hath set a boundary betwixt light and darkness, dividing the two hemispheres from each other as by a line or circle; yet the industry or avarice of man is without bounds. He searcheth into the land of darkness itself for hid treasures.

THIS seems to be the meaning of verse the third, which is somewhat obscure in the original.

THE Hebrew is, *ketz sam le-chofhec u-le-col taelith*—that is, *He hath set an end* (or, an end is set) *to darkness, and an extremity to all* †, or to the universe—It follows, *Hu choker eben opbel ve-tzalmaveth*—*Hu*, with an emphasis, *He* (meaning man, that audacious creature) *searcheth out the stone of darkness, and of the shadow of death*—He digs into another world, as it were, for gold and precious stones.

*Taelith*, as well as *ketz*, signifies the end, the border, or extremity of any thing. And the extremity of darkness, and the extremity of all, or the universe, I apprehend to mean the same horizontal circle which divides the light and darkness from each other. For what is above the horizon is, in effect, the universe to us—At least it was so to the ancients, who considered all below it, as to them, a region of perpetual darkness. It was this upper visible hemisphere they called the world. This seems to be the Scripture-language, 1 Sam. ii. 8. *The pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.* And so Job xviii. 18. *to be driven from light into darkness*, is the same as to be *chased, mittebel, out of the world*.

THAT this must be the meaning here seems further confirmed by a parallel place in this speech of Job, Chap. xxiv. 10. where he points out the same hori-

\* Ver. 1, 2. *Surely there is a vein for the silver, &c.*

† So מְחוֹלֵל כָּל, *medholel col*, *he that formed all*, that is, *the universe*, Prov. xxvi. 10. And עֹשֶׂה כָּל, *the Maker of the universe*. Isa. xlv. 24.



zontal circle in almost the same words. *Chok chag yal pené maim vadb taclith ér vim chofbec.* He hath set a circle as a boundary upon the face of the waters, even to the extremity of light with darkness; that is, to the very edge where light and darkness meet.

THIS is evidently the sense of that passage; and we see the expressions in both are much the same. Only what is here called *taclith ér, the extremity of light*, is in the other passage called the *extremity of all*, or the universe, meaning the whole enlightened hemisphere.

IN this then be the true sense of this difficult passage; I believe the reader will agree with me, that the thought is very noble and sublime. It is as if we should say, in the language of Horace, *Nequicquam Deus absceidit, &c.* In vain is it, that God hath divided the light from the darkness, if men will dig into the land of darkness itself for gold and treasures.

As the author of the book of Job was, perhaps, the most concise writer that ever appeared in the world, and his language the most concise; he just gives you a glimpse of things, and leaves the rest to be supplied by the imagination of the reader. His thoughts are, like the gold and jewels he speaks of, precious in themselves: but we must sometimes labour hard, and go deep for them.

OF this we have a further proof in what follows; where he proceeds to give another instance of the daring spirit and ingenuity of mankind. How they cross the broad rivers and arms of the sea for commerce; where there is no path for the foot of man; where they lessen to the sight, and are tossed upon the waves.

THIS I take to be the meaning of verse the 4th, which may be literally translated thus—*\* Paratz nuchal mevim ger*—The flood interrupts from with the stranger, (or *me-vam ger* from the stranger people, a

\* פרץ נחל מעם גר

*populo hospite*; as *לען* *מען*, a *populo barbaro*; Pl. xiv.

1. The Hebrew will bear either rendering; for it is the pointing only makes the difference— It follows † *ban-nishcachim minni regel, dallu meenosh, nayu*. ‘Forgotten of the foot, they appear less than men, they are tossed.’

If we were to see such a passage in Pindar, I am persuaded we should think that which I have given above to be the sense of it; and admire the strong and lively images here set before us.

THERE are but two places (that I remember) in the book of Job, where there is any allusion to navigation; and both shew it in its infancy. One is Chap. ix. 26. where Job compares the course of human life, and the rapidity with which it passes to the *swift ships*; or, as it is in the margin of our bibles, *ships of desire*; that is, such as are longed for, and long to be at their destined port, and crowd all the sail they can for this purpose. This gives, indeed, a very poetical image. But if we will take the Judgment of a very learned commentator\*, he tells us, it ought rather to be rendered, *ships of cane, or the Papyrus*; that is, such light vessels as they used in passing the river Nile, and other great rivers and arms of the sea. This, no doubt, was the first essay made by mankind towards navigation; and perhaps the farthest that their skill had reached in Job’s time.

THE other passage is this beautiful one before us, where the sea is not so much as mentioned, but *נחל*, *nachal*, a torrent or flood— Some arm of the sea, perhaps, of a few leagues over, which dividing the several nations, must interrupt their hospitality and

† הנשכחין מני רגל דלו מאנוש גען

\* Schultens in loc. who translates it, *prætermearunt cum navibus papyraceis*— and in the note, *אבה ebeb arundo, papyretum. Naves arundine vel papyro Nilotica textæ, quibus nil velocius.*

Lucan mentions these vessels, Lib. 4.

— sic cum tenet omnia Nilus,  
Conferitur bibula Memphis cymba papyro.



commerce with each other, or render it very difficult and far about; unless by the help of navigation, and the hardy mariner's venturing boldly to cross the streight.

ONE would think that Job had the boat and mariners in his eye, when he describes them so poetically in these three remarkable particulars—— That they are *forgotten of the foot*, that is, Their feet forget them, and are no longer serviceable to them, in this very different way of travelling—— That they *lessen to the sight*—— דָּלוּ כְּאֶנֶשׁ, *dallu me-enosh*, *extenuantur præ homine*—— they look like crows instead of men, as they go off farther and farther from the shoars—— and lastly, נָנְאוּ *nayu agitantur*, *are tossed up and down upon the billows*. The word seems to denote any involuntary and irregular motion; and is used by the Psalmist for the staggering of a drunkard, to which he compares the unsteady motions of a ship's crew tossed in a storm, in that fine description, Ps. cvii. 27. *They reel to and fro*, וִינָנְאוּ, *and stagger like a drunkard, and are at their wit's end*—— And thus we might translate it here too, (*viz.* they stagger) without any great disadvantage to the sense.

I CANNOT forbear observing, that there is another place, where the word is used with the greatest beauty and propriety, but the sense of it unhappily overlooked by our translators. I mean, in Jotham's apologue or fable, Judg. ix. where the olive-tree says, *Shall I leave my fatness*, &c. *ve-balatti la-nouay yal ba-yetzim*, *and go to be promoted over the trees?* And so the fig-tree and the vine, *Shall I leave my sweetness*—— *Shall I leave my wine*—— *and go to be promoted over the trees?* Thus it is in our translation.

BUT the Hebrew word never signifies to be *promoted*, or *prefer'd*; but to be moved to and fro, to wander, to stagger, to be shaken, to be tossed. The motion of trees by the wind is remarkably expressed by this word, Isai. vii. 2.

I COULD wish it had been rendered therefore, according to the exact and genuine sense of the word, *Shall I leave my fatness— Shall I leave my sweetness—and go to be tossed upon the trees?* What a lively image of the hazards, and the cares of government! As if the king of the trees was to have his throne placed upon the top of the highest tree in the forest, and be there exposed to every storm of wind that blowed. Certainly they who experience the advantages of a good government, and dwell safely every man under his vine and his fig-tree (or suppose it an oak or apple-tree, with the fruits of the vine and fig-tree brought home to them from afar,) while they enjoy that sweetest of all earthly blessings, a liberty civil and religious, as far as the ends of government and the peace and order of society will admit, do not always well consider, how much they owe to their governors——

THERE is another word in this sentence, which may demand to be considered and have its meaning fixed, I mean *nachal*—\*. But the sense which I have given to it, appears sufficiently confirmed from the use of the word in Scripture. It sometimes signifies a vale, but oftener a torrent or tide of spreading waters, which has somewhat of the same appearance, and in like manner divides one country, or one part of it from another. *Ce-nechalim nit-taju* †, *they are spread forth as the valleys*, or rather, as the floods of water, says Balaam of the tents of Israel, as they over-spread the plains of Moab, Num. xxiv. 6. And, without doubt, the regular encampment of six hundred thousand ‡ fighting men, together with their families and followers, amounting

\* As for פָּרַץ *paratz*, it signifies *rupit*, with all its compounds, *erupit*, *prorupit*, *disrupit*, &c. the Lexicons add, *divisit*, *fregit*. So that I have put no force upon the word, by translating it *interrupt*.

† לְנַחֲלֵים נִתְּתָיו — Num. xxiv. 6.

‡ Num. xxvi. 51.



in all, as commonly computed, to three millions, must needs make a fine appearance, and extend itself very wide. This comparison therefore greatly helps to fix the sense of the word— To which I might add, that the river Nile \*, so famous above all the rivers of the world for its overflowing, does in all probability derive its name from the Hebrew word נַחַל *nachal*.

THE reader will forgive me that I have dwelt so long upon this verse, somewhat difficult in itself, but rendered more perplexed by the unhappy guesses of the commentators; for I have met with none that has given a tolerable explication of it.

SOME Spanish commentators, it seems, out of a laudable zeal for the honour of their country, would have it, that Job, in this passage, foretold by the spirit of prophecy the navigation of the Spaniards to the Indies; that they should traverse the great Ocean, and discover the gold and silver mines of America † — So says their countryman Gaspar Sanctius, a Jesuit, upon the place— Who though he rejects the prophecy, yet judges rightly, that men's crossing the sea to fetch gold and jewels from distant countries, is what is here intended. This conjecture, I suppose, he built upon the former part of the verse, as rendered in the Latine Vulgate translation, which they are oblig'd to acknowledge as authentick. *Dividit torrens a populo peregrinante*— And so far the rendering is not much amiss. But then it follows, *eos quos oblitus est pes egentis hominis et invios*— This is so unlike the Hebrew, and so little like the sense, that it is no wonder to find him greatly embarrassed in endeavouring to explain it.

\* As the Sirians and Egyptians pronounced *Bayal*, *Beel*, from whence Βηλος, so they pronounced *nachal* or *nabal*, *neel*, whence Νεϊλος— So says Vossius *de Idol.* lib. 2. c. 74.

† —*Transmarinas regiones Hispanorum navigatione fore lustrandas, quas dividebat interjectus Oceanus*—

AND yet these gentlemen, it must be owned, have an admirable talent in solving difficulties, and reconciling their infallible translation with the Hebrew, when they please to exert it. For the curiosity of such readers as are unacquainted with their commentaries, I shall just produce a single instance from this chapter, and conclude the section.

JOB xxviii. 18. The Hebrew is, מִשְׁכַּח חֲכָמָה מִפְּנִינִים, *mesbec chocma mip-peninim*: literally, *Traçtio sapientie præ margaritis*. Wisdom is more attractive, or, draws more in weight and value than rubies. *The price of wisdom is above rubies*, as our translation well expresses the sense.

THIS the Latine Vulgate renders, *trahitur sapientia de occultis*. Wisdom is drawn from secret (places.)

How shall we reconcile this with the Hebrew? Why, Sanctius tells us, that *de* (from) in this place, must signify the same as *præ* (above, or before, in comparison) because *min*, in the Hebrew, carries both senses; and the Vulgate follows the idiom of the Hebrew: that *occultis* means hid treasures: and *trahitur*, the verb passive, is much the same as *traçtio*, the noun. And so the meaning comes at last to this, *comportationem aut acquisitionem sapientie pretiosiores esse cunctis opibus et gemmis*; that *the attainment of wisdom is more worth than all wealth and jewels*.

SEE here the dexterity of a Romish critic or commentator! Who that did not believe the infallibility of the Trent-council, could have extracted such a sense out of *trahitur sapientia de occultis*?

THIS Sanctius nevertheless, I must do him the justice to own, has shewn himself in some places a man of sense and judgment. Calmet gives him the character of one of the most excellent commentators that he knows. But a most excellent commentator in their way, may and must sometimes play the fool. For what can good sense produce, when held in chains and slavery, in a land where the pope and the inquisition reigns? It is strange, that any one, who stands obliged to maintain the errors of popery,



should presume to write upon the holy Scriptures; and yet what bulky volumes of this sort, and what numbers of them, have proceeded from the colleges of the Jesuits alone, the most determined champions for the papacy!

## S E C T. XV.

TO proceed with our account of this remarkable chapter—

JOB continues in the following verses, to give further instances of the daring and yet successful attempts of mankind, to provide themselves with every necessary and conveniency of life. Such as corn for bread \*; Fountains of water, in the dry places where they are wanted, cut out of the hard rock †; and rapid rivers restrained within their channels, to prevent the mischiefs of their overflow ‡. To which he adds again, gold, and sapphires, and other precious stones, dug deep from the dark caverns of the earth, where *the lion's foot never trod, nor the vulture's eye hath reached* ||. In short, that there is scarce any thing so concealed, but what the industry of man had brought to light—Wisdom alone excepted—

For all this is designed to introduce the great question, Ver. 12. *But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?*

It follows, *Man knoweth not the price thereof, nor is it to be found in the land of the living.*

*The depth saith, it is not in me: And the sea saith it is not in me.*

*It cannot be gotten for gold: Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*

*It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir; with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.*

\* Ver. 5. † Ver. 10. ‡ Ver. 11. || Ver. 7, 8.

*The gold and the chrystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels, (or vessels) of the finest gold.*

*No mention shall be made of coral and of pearls; for the price of wisdom is above rubies.*

*The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it; neither shall it be valued with pure gold.*

*Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?*

I HAVE quoted all the intermediate verses betwixt the first and last proposal of this great question, that the reader might take notice of that beautiful repetition which is here made of several of the particulars before-mentioned, and the fine turn that is given to each—*The depth saith, it is not in me: And the sea saith, it is not in me*—As if he had said, men may dig into the bowels of the earth, and find gold and treasures there; but they will be as far to seek for wisdom as ever: And could they traverse the great sea itself, as they now cross a river or a strait, yet would they find that wisdom is not to be had in the way of commerce or exchange.

IT follows,—*It cannot be had for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*

*It is of more value than the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx and the sapphire*—

THE *sapphire* was mentioned before; and being itself a Hebrew word, there can be no dispute about the meaning of it. But for the other words, whether we translate them rightly by *the onyx, coral, pearl, the topaz, &c.* is a controverted point among the learned: and the obscurity of the text, in this, as well as other places, affords no inconsiderable argument of the antiquity of the book.

ONE thing we cannot but remark from this passage, *viz.* how early the race of men had learned to set a value on those precious trinkets; which are here so lavishly and temptingly exposed to view, that, we could scarce have forgiven the speaker, but for the honesty of his intention.



*It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx and the sapphire—The gold and the chrystal cannot equal it—No mention shall be made of coral and of pearls—The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it; neither shall it be valued with the finest gold.*

THE variety of gems here ranged in order, (whatever they be) with the words, *gold, fine gold, the gold of Ophir, &c.* coming so conveniently between, looks as if he had intended to present to our imagination a string of jewels set in gold—

HOWEVER this be, it cannot but give us an high idea of the splendor of Job's condition in the time of his prosperity, to see that he was so well acquainted with all those rare and costly things which the world calls treasures; and of which, no doubt, he had his share, or might have, if he pleased, for his curiosity or use \*. But it gives one a still higher idea of his integrity and good sense, to find him representing wisdom, as beyond comparison, more valuable than all—

BUT where then is this valuable thing to be found? *Whence cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living; and kept close from the fowls of the air.*

*From the fowls of the air, or heaven, (ba-shamaim)*  
—Had augury been practised in the days of Job,

\* Diodorus Siculus, and Pliny, both concur to rank the Arabians amongst the richest nations. They were particularly remarkable for wearing jewels, as appears from judges viii. 24. where Gideon desires every man to give him *זָלָלָךְ* *נָזֶם*, *inaurem spoliū sui, the ear-rings of his prey*—it follows, *for they had golden ear-rings because they were Ishmaelites, that is, Arabians.*

The Jewel which Abraham's servant put upon Rebeka's face, (Gen. xxiv. 47.) is called by the same name, *נָזֶם*, *nezem*, and seems to have adorned the forehead and the cheeks at once; being hung probably by a ring or wire concealed under the hair. In the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, we have a remarkable account of the merchandize of the several countries where the Tyrians or Phœnicians traded: And Ver. 22. the product of Sheba and Raamah (parts of Arabia Felix) is said to be *choice spices, all precious stones, and gold*—

one would think he had here alluded to it\*. But I cannot find, that there is the least mention in this book (which is another mark of its antiquity,) of divination of any sort; except what Tully calls, improperly, the natural divination, *per somnia & vaticinationes* †, by dreams and extasies or prophetic raptures. And it is remarkable, what he says of those two sorts, that many of the philosophers, who discarded all the rest, allowed of these—I suppose, because they were supported by unquestionable facts. See *Tull. de Divin. lib. 1. cap. 3.*

THAT there have been things extraordinarily revealed upon extraordinary occasions, is so well attested in history, that it cannot with reason be denied. ——— The common error of the Heathen was, their endeavouring to reduce these extraordinary notices within rules, and to look out for what never was in being, an † art of divination.

BUT

\* If one may take a hint from the old Scholiast upon Homer, it should seem as if augury was introduced, among the Heathen, together with their men-deities; for he tells us, that Jupiter and the eagle (τελειότατος πτερυγῶν, which of all the winged tribes gives the most certain omen) were born together—*Schol on Il. 9. 247.*

† *Duo sunt divinandi genera, quorum alterum artis est, alterum nature. Quæ est autem gens, aut quæ civitas, quæ non aut extra pecudum, aut monstra, aut fulgura interpretantium, aut augurum, aut astrologorum, aut sortium, (ea enim fere artis sunt) aut somniorum, aut vaticinationum (hæc enim duo naturalia putantur) prædictione moveatur. Tull. de Divinat. Lib. 1. Cap. 6. p. 13. Edit. Davies.*

1 Even old Hesiod could make bold to say, (and he might well say it of the Heathen Undertakers,)

Μαυρίσ δ' εἰδῆς ἱερὸν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων

Ὅτις ἂν εἰδῆν Ζηνὸς νόον αἰγιόχοιο. Hef. Fragment.

Pindar seems to be of the same mind; that there is no certain sign of future things or events given to men by the gods—

Σύμβολον δ' ἔπω τις ἐπιχθονίων πεισὼν

Ἀμφὶ πρῶτος ἰσομοίνας εὖρεν θεόθεν. Olym. 12.

All these arts of divination were abominated and forbidden under the Jewish dispensation, as may be seen, Deut. xviii. 9—15. And the spirit of prophecy with them was quite another thing; vouchsafed, restrained, withdrawn in such measures, and at such times,



BUT to pass by the follies and errors of mankind, which are infinite; our enquiry at present is after the true wisdom. And where is this to be found? *Whence cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding?*

To this difficult question we have an answer in the following verses; but it opens to us by degrees.

VER. 22. *Destruction and death say, we have heard the same thereof with our ears.*

*Destruction and Death!* What can this mean but the dead? The metonymy is easy, and gives a clear and natural sense to the passage. He had before told us, that wisdom, and her place, were *hid from the eyes of all the living*\*; and therefore where should go to look for it, but among the dead?

*Destruction and death*, two synonymous words, used probably, after the Hebrew manner, to increase the signification, and to denote a long race of their dead ancestors from the beginning of the world downward.

THE generations of men then, says Job, who have lived before us, and are now gone to the regions of the dead; these have told us, באזנינו שמענו שמעה, *We have heard the bearing thereof with our ears*; that is, We have heard something relating to this question about wisdom, delivered down to us by tradition from our forefathers.

THAT this must be the meaning can scarce be doubted, when it is considered, what a regard is paid, throughout this whole dispute, by every speaker, and in every speech almost, to what was taught them by their ancestors; from whom all their wisdom, in a manner, was derived to them, transmitted down with care, and received with a religious veneration—

as God saw fit and came not by the will of man, (as St. Peter excellently distinguishes it) but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

\* Ver. 21.

So that the citing their authority in favour of the point in question, was looked upon as an unanswerable argument.

NOR is this a wonder considering what a short remove they were from the very fountain-head of their traditions; and that these, when traced to their beginning, carried with them a divine authority. For whether derived from Adam, or from Noah; as the first (in his state of innocence, at least) was admitted to a free converse with his maker: so the other was a prophet, to whom God was pleased to reveal himself in a very singular manner. And therefore the instructions conveyed down from these must needs have been esteemed as oracles; and those who had the advantage of living nearest to them, and so were supposed to have received the greatest share of this traditional knowledge, must have been looked upon, of course, as the wisest men.

THIS is evidently the reason of that great regard paid to old age, and to the sayings of their forefathers, which we meet with in this book.

IT seems to have been the received notion of those times, and to have passed into a proverb, that of Job, (Chap. xii. 12.) *With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding*—When therefore Job had urged this saying, in disparagement of the wisdom of his friends, which appeared new to him, and as such, to be suspected; we find *Eliphaz* in his turn, retorting upon him thus, (Chap. xv. 7.) *Art thou the first man that was born, or wert thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God, and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou, that we know not? What understandest thou, which is not in us? With us are both the greybearded, and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*

HERE, we see the whole controversy about superior wisdom put upon this issue, which of them was the oldest man, or had the oldest men, for his instructors.



THERE are several other passages remarkable to the same purpose.

WHEN Job would set out the uncontrollable power of God to defeat all the counsels and the purposes of men; one of the strongest phrases he could find to express it by, is this—*He taketh away the understanding of the aged* \*.

WHEN he would describe the profound respect that was paid him in the time of his prosperity; he expresses it by this singular circumstance, that *when he went out to the gate through the city, or prepared his seat in the street, (or court) the aged arose and stood up* †.

ON the other hand, when he would paint the low estate into which he was now fallen; he does it in a very lively manner, by mixing this surprizing incident, *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision* ‡—And again, *Upon my right hand rise the youth—they push away my feet*—&c. ¶.

THIS indeed might well surprize him, in an age when, next the duty to their maker and their parents, the first and chief thing that seems to have been inculcated, was a due respect of the younger to their elders.

OF this, and of the reasons of it, we have frequent intimation in almost every chapter of this book. But there is something so particular in the speech of Bildad, Chap. viii. that I shall here take leave to cite the passage at large.

THIS speaker had been exhorting Job to apply himself to God by prayer; upon this assurance, that if he were innocent, as he pretended, or shewed the marks of a sincere repentance, there was no doubt but he would be restored, through the divine mercy, to his former state of prosperity; but if he should forget God in his calamity, or play the hypocrite with him, there was then no hopes for him—And for this

\* Chap. xii. 20. † Ch. xix. 7, 8. ‡ Ch. xxx. 1. ¶ Ver. 12.

he quotes a saying of their ancestors in these remarkable words,

VER. 8. *For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.*

*(For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow)*

*Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*

*Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?*

*Whilst it is yet in its greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.*

*So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.*

THERE are several things in this passage well worthy of our observation.

As first, his referring Job to their ancestors of former times, as the best instructors in wisdom.

THEN urging the comparative ignorance of the generation that then was, and the reason of it, viz. the shortness of men's lives, *We are but of yesterday and know nothing, for our days upon earth are a shadow.* Human life being at this time in a swift decline; and reduced in a few generations from eight or nine hundred years to an hundred and fifty, or thereabout—

FOR what is most to our purpose is, in the next place, his representing these long lived ancestors of theirs, from whom they derived their wisdom, as living but an age or two before them—They were the *men of the former age*, or perhaps the fathers and grandfathers of these. And it appears from the Scripture-history, that Shem the son of Noah, who lived five hundred years after the flood, might well have been a cotemporary with the grandfathers or great grandfathers of Job and his friends. And with what authority would such an one teach them! and with what attention would his instructions be received!

INDEED



INDEED the fame of these restorers of the human race was so great for many ages after, that when mankind fell into the superstition of worshipping men-deities, there is little doubt to be made, but that these were the first mortals that were deified; and that Saturn, and his three famous sons (who are said by old Homer \*, to have divided the world between them by a fair lot) were in reality no other than Noah and his sons. The learned Bochart has made out this (I think) beyond exception, in the first chapter of his *Phaleg*: where he has produced as much evidence for it as can reasonably be demanded, and more than one would expect in a case of this nature.

THE last thing I shall observe from the passage before us, is the style or manner in which the precepts of their ancestors were transmitted to them; and that is, by some apt simile or comparison, drawn from nature, and like a picture fitted to engage the attention, and by agreeably entertaining the imagination, to leave a strong impression on the memory.

SUCH is that natural and beautiful comparison we have here; and which, by the way of introducing it, appears plainly to have been a proverbial saying delivered down from their forefathers, and perhaps taught them from their cradles——*Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. Shall not they teach thee and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart.* Out of the heart——the seat of wisdom always with the ancients.

*Have not they then (says he) transmitted to thee this wise lesson? that as the rush cannot grow up without mire, nor the flag without water; so neither can any thing flourish or prosper long without the blessing of Almighty*

\* Il. o. 187. Τῆς γὰρ τ' ἐκ Κρόνου ἱερῆς, &c.

*God; and how should the ungodly or the hypocrite expect his blessing!*

ONE scarce knows which to admire most; the piety of the sentiment, or the elegance and justness of the comparison.

THE Redeemer of mankind, who came into the world, amongst other great designs, to revive by his teaching that simplicity of manners which was so observable in those ancient times; (I mean, that piety, and charity, and humility, and purity, and probity, and truth, and those other native ornaments of the mind of man, which we see so admirably delineated throughout this book) was pleased to chuse the same method of conveying his doctrine and precepts, under the delightful style of an easy parable or similitude.

BUT enough hath been said, I hope, to vindicate the interpretation I have given of verse 22. *Destruction and death say, we have heard the fame thereof with our ears*—

AND I have dwelt the longer upon this point, as judging it a thing of some importance in itself, as well as necessary to a right understanding of the following part of the chapter, to shew what a regard was paid by Job and his friends to the traditional doctrines and precepts that had been delivered down to them from the beginning. For as they carried with them the authority of a divine revelation, they were to them the sacred rule both of their faith and manners.

## S E C T. XVI.

WE are now come to that part of the chapter, which gives an answer to the great enquiry, *Whence then cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding?*

*Destruction and death say; that is, the generations of men, who have lived before us, and are now gone to the regions of the dead, these (says Job) have told us,*



us, *We have heard the same thereof with our ears*\*; We have had something relating to this question about wisdom delivered down to us by tradition from our forefathers.

AMONGST others, these important particulars; that

*God (alone) understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof*†.

FOR his knowledge reaches to all things and places.

*He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven*‡.

AND that with a wisdom so infallible, and a power so uncontrollable, as to give a certain weight and measure to things the most uncertain and inconstant with respect to us, the winds and the waters; *To make the weight for the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure*\*.

WE have had it moreover delivered down to us (says Job) in the same traditional way, that this infinitely wise and glorious Being, when he made the world, not only displayed his own wisdom in the admirable contrivance of it, but at the same time declared what was the wisdom proper to man, the best and truest wisdom he could attain unto; which was, *to acknowledge and adore his Maker, and to pay all due obedience to his laws.*

*When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightening of the thunder;*

*Then did he see it and declare it, he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.*

*And unto man he said, behold the fear of the Lord, this is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding*||.

Unto man he said—The Hebrew is, *va-jomer le Adam*, which might be rendered as a proper name: for it is

\* Chap. xxviii. 22.

† Ver. 23.

‡ Ver. 24.

\* Chap. xxviii. 25.

|| Ver. 26, 27, 28.

plain from the circumstance of time, that Adam and no other can be meant.

WE have here then a record of something spoken by God to the first man, not to be met with in the book of Genesis. But whether spoken to him before, or after his fall, is not so easy to determine. If after the fall, the words carry with them a reproof, as well as an instruction highly seasonable, and suited to the circumstances of our unhappy progenitor. As if God had said to him, You, who in defiance of the prohibition I had given you, have been seeking after another sort of wisdom and knowledge than was proper for you; go, learn from sure experience, that your truest wisdom is to fear me, and to pay an absolute obedience to my commands.

AND here again we may observe, how aptly *destruction and death* are made the conveyers of this great truth from Adam down through his posterity; since it was the disobedience of our first parents that brought death into the world; and every instance of mortality therefore would naturally recall to the minds of them and their descendants, the history of the fall, and read them a new lesson of obedience.

I MIGHT observe further, that if the opinion of learned men be well grounded, that there was neither rain nor thunder before the sin and fall of our first parents; then here is another particular, which seems to shew that this admonition to Adam must be given after the fall: for God is said to give it, *when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightening of the thunder*. And if he was pleased at the same time to accompany it with a display of his thunder in all its terrors, and this was the first time that Adam heard those awful sounds: what an impression must it make upon his heart? And how could he chuse but remember it himself, and transmit it with care to his posterity? And we have some reason to think, that this might be the case, as the law was afterwards delivered from mount Sinai with the same solemnity.

It



It is wonderful to observe, in what a variety of natural and sublime expressions the thunder is described to us in this book, and all of them with a reference to the Deity, as *the noise of his tabernacle*; the *murmurs of his mouth*, that *by which he judgeth the people*\*, and the like.

Let the thunder therefore be here considered as the instrument or token of God's wrath; and the rain, by which he usually blesteth† the earth and his inhabitants, as a token of his mercy; with what exquisite propriety are they here united, to enforce that lesson of obedience which follows.

To which it may not be improper to add, that though this admonition to Adam be here expressed in very general terms, *to fear God, and to depart from evil*; there is reason to believe that God was pleased to give him at the same time a more distinct account of the particulars of his duty.

This seems plainly intimated in these words; *Then did God see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.* Then did God see, and declare what? Wisdom (no doubt) the great subject of enquiry throughout this chapter: But not his own wisdom, surely; this he saw and knew perfectly, and it was the same from all eternity; but the wisdom proper for man, and which he now communicated to him, declared or numbered, established, and defined it‡. Terms, which seem to imply a full and elaborate system of religion and morality; but summed up in the following words, that *the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

\* Job xxxvi. 29, 31. Chap. xxxvii. 2—5.

† Thus the former and the latter rain, in its season, is promised as a blessing, Deut. xi. 14. and elsewhere—

‡ Thus the Hebrew words, *jesapparah, hacinah, ve-gam, chakarah*, may be rendered.

The

## THE CONCLUSION.

AND here I may fitly conclude, for we are arrived at what may be regarded as a good moral to the poem.

WE now see the reason, why this holy man, amidst all the calamities that had overwhelmed him like a flood, still persist in that well-weighed and generous resolution, which he expresses in the foregoing chapter, (and which points out the connection betwixt these two chapters, about which the commentators seem a little puzzled) Chap. xxvii. 5.—*Till I die, I will not remove my integrity from me : my righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go : my heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live.* It follows. *Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and be that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul.*

WELL might Job thus reason and resolve, who had learned from the divine oracle this important lesson ; that, be the circumstances or events of things what they will in this world, yet, *to fear God is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.*

THIS he was sure of, because God had said it——

And here therefore he fixes his foot, where every wise man gladly will, (I was going to say, every man of sense and sobriety, who, like Job and his friends, have ever experienced the embarrassments of their own reasonings) upon a divine revelation.

WHAT the traditions of their ancestors were to these men, That the bible is to us ; and happy were it for us, if we paid it the same pious regard, That we would give it its due weight in the determining our religious controversies ; be studious to enrich our minds with the knowledge of its awful truths, and to form our lives by the simplicity of its admirable pre-



precepts. That we would allow these sacred books the privilege, at least, which we so seldom deny to others of any merit; I mean, that of a serious and attentive reading; (a small favour considering the character they bear,) and we should find, that they want nothing to recommend them, but their being thoroughly understood.

It is true, that they require many helps to a right understanding of them; and so does every book in the world that was written at any great distance of time from us. But these helps are every where to be had—We abound with commentaries, and other treatises of divinity, well intended for this purpose, and very useful in their kind. Nevertheless they who would go a shorter and a surer way to work, and (if my little experience may warrant me to say it) a way that is much more satisfactory and less fatiguing, must study these sacred books in their own native tongues; and they will find it true, what is commonly said, that the Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.

It is strange, that persons of a liberal education, whose curiosity often prompts them to take no small pains to learn a modern language; or to acquire so much skill in the Latin and Greek, as may enable them to read with ease a classic author, though a Heathen, should not be excited by the same curiosity (if by no other motive) to get a little insight into the Hebrew, and to study in their original language, (I might call it perhaps, with some, the original language, as a further incentive to the curious) books of so singular a nature, that in all the Heathen world of learning there is scarce any thing to be met with of the kind; not any thing that will bear the least comparison.

To say nothing of the Scripture-history, and the important points there taught us, not elsewhere to be found; I shall only instance in the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and the Book of Psalms.

We find indeed, some scraps of oracles among the Heathen, adulterated, stolen, or mixed, and of uncertain date and origin. But what are these, compared with the many volumes of authentic prophecies delivered by the messengers of God, in terms as awful and affecting, as the most lively imagination, excited and illuminated by a divine influx could conceive; intermixed with promises and threats, and a set of moral precepts, highly useful in themselves, and enforced under the highest obligation, as the express laws or commands of the great Creator and Governor of the world; and withal, such an idea rising to our thoughts, from every page almost, of that Almighty Being, as shames all human efforts to describe him; much more the vain attempts of Heathen poetry or philosophy! all this appears even upon a cursory and superficial view of these divine oracles.

BUT when we penetrate further into the true design of the prophetic office, and consider it in its twofold aspect; not only as these extraordinary messengers were sent from time to time to preserve a purity of religion and morals amongst the Jews, the only worshippers of the true God amidst an idolatrous world; but as they were the harbingers to a greater prophet that was to arise in very distant times: It is here we find still ampler subject for our admiration; while we observe two sorts of prophecies to answer these two different intentions; the one more plain and clear, and easily intelligible to those to whom they were addressed, of events very near approaching, or sometimes at a greater distance, but punctually fulfilled, to establish the authority of God and of his prophets among them. In the other, we observe one great event, of infinite importance to mankind, shewn in a variety of views, to create a hope in those to whom the prophecies were given, and a faith more certain and explicit in those who should be born into the world, after its wonderful accomplishment



complishment in every view that had been given of it.

If the prophecies of this latter sort, though well understood in their general design, were in some of their circumstances obscure to those who first received and were the keepers of them; it is what the nature of the thing required, nor could it for many reasons have been otherwise. It is sufficient that they were cleared up by the event, in a manner worthy of that infinite wisdom that inspired them, and conducted all the intermediate steps to their completion.

THERE is something so grand and magnificent in this scheme of the redemption of mankind from sin and error thus foretold and executed; such a display of the wisdom and goodness and omnipotence of him who declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done\*; that it affords a pleasure of the highest kind even in the speculation: And a person of a studious turn of mind must have very little curiosity, (one would think) who would not be induced at the first hearing, like the noble Bereans, to search the Scriptures whether these things were so†.

If we turn from the Prophets to the book of Psalms, and compare it with the Heathen hymns to their Gods; we see here too a most surprizing difference.

LET any one read the Orphic Hymns (as they are called) which are a collection of the devotions these blind worshippers paid to their imaginary deities: you see only a catalogue of hard names or titles, by which their gods were usually distinguished, and with the repetition whereof they hoped to sooth and please them: there is here and there intermixed a sentence that looks like a petition, or you

\* Isaiah vi. 9. and Acts vii. 42.

would scarce be able to discern whether they were praying or conjuring—It is difficult to speak of a thing so ridiculous in terms, that will not seem to have some levity in them.

If you think you shall be better pleased with the hymns of Callimachus or Homer, cast your sight there—You will observe, perhaps, a fine spirit of poetry, and the sweetest harmony of numbers bestowed upon a set of idle stories of their gods, as monstrous and irrational, as they are unedifying. Our mythological gentlemen may strain their wits to make sense of them by the help of allegory; they will often find the meaning impenetrable.

How wretched, and how wild a thing, is error! How amiable is truth! what an advantage is it to the mind of man, to be set right but in one important point, and not to be mistaken in the object of religious worship! Is it owing to this, or to a higher cause, that in the book of Psalms we observe a poetry the most sublime, and a piety the most solid and rational very happily united, and the one deriving a lustre from the other.

I AM hastening to a conclusion, and therefore must not take the liberty to enlarge on what may seem a digression. But if any one can read the civth Psalm, (for example) where the great creator of the universe is celebrated in the loftiest strains, and the works of his creation and providence displayed in order to our view; without admiring the variety and choice of images, as they pass before us like a moving picture; the delicacy of the transitions; the strength, conciseness, and yet clearness of expression; the propriety and aptness, as well as warmth of the devout reflections interspersed: in a word, the beauty of each single part, and the harmonious structure of the whole; he may assure himself he has no genius for poetry. Or

\* See *The Enquiry into Homer's Life and Writings*. p. 203.



if he thinks he can find any thing in the Heathen poets to compare with it, he may justly apprehend some defect either in his morals or his judgment. Nor have I pitched on this Psalm, as superlatively excellent above the rest: Let him read the cvth, cvlth, cvliith; he will find peculiar beauties to admire in each of them.

UPON the whole, I shall think my endeavours well answered, if what has been here attempted with a view chiefly to illustrate one single book of Scripture, may be in any degree instrumental to the promoting a just esteem and reverence for the Holy Scriptures in general; or may recommend them to the serious regard though but of a few, who by the advantage of their education, or eminence of station, have it in their power to set the pattern to others; and especially persons of a politer turn, who (if they will pardon the freedom of the address) seem in a more particular manner obliged to lend their assistance towards restoring to the Holy Scriptures that due honour and authority, which a false politeness has contributed, more than any one thing else perhaps, to rob them of. Let us banish it again back to the regions whence it came, and where it may suit well with a religion that will not bear the light of Holy Scripture. If we wish well to our own country, let us beware how we throw aside our bibles, or treat them with a fashionable contempt or neglect. Which, beside the danger of it to our constitution, must unavoidably be attended with a corruption of manners widely spreading and increasing in proportion to it. For as there can be no sufficient curb to the exorbitant passions of men without religion; so there can be no religion of a sufficient authority to influence the bulk of mankind, without a Revelation real or supposed; nor is there any other real Revelation of the will of God, beside that contained in the Holy Scriptures. So that we may venture to affirm, that they

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are the only true support of true religion in the world.

HAPPY is that people, who enjoy the light of these, with a free liberty of examining them, and of applying all the helps that learning can afford to a right understanding of them. If, after all, the learned differ in their explication of them; it is a satisfaction however that we are not obliged to acquiesce in this or that man's interpretation; but are allowed, as far as we are able, to see and examine for ourselves; and that we are sure the rule itself must be right and infallible, however fallible men may differ in the sense which they would fix upon it.

MAY we ever enjoy this liberty, and make a diligent as well as a sober and modest use of it! nor by our negligence, or imprudence, incur the severe censure passed on those, who have a *price in their hand to get wisdom, but have no heart* \*, or inclination to it.

THE divine oracles contain every thing, in a manner, for which a book can be valuable; the oldest history, the best morality, the noblest poetry, the only true theology; in short, a treasury of wisdom not to be exhausted: If the vicious and the thoughtless know not how to value them; or a writer here and there, of an odd cast of understanding, has attempted to signalize himself by disparaging them; men of virtue, sense, and a solidity of mind have always loved, admired and revered them. Amongst these, for the honour of our own country, what a fair catalogue of illustrious names might be produced; (I mean not of such whose profession may seem to have set a bias on their judgment, but others;) persons of the most improved understanding and the most elevated genius, as well as eminent lovers of truth, and of mankind; the Boyles, the Locks, the Newtons, the Addisons—So that if human authority be of any consideration in the present case, we have the best and most unexceptionable that the world affords, for the excellency of these sacred

\* Prov. xvii. 16.



books. And if any one can doubt of their divine authority, after weighing the external evidence which God hath given us of it; let him but study them thoroughly and without prejudice, and I may venture to promise him that he will feel it. I mean that he will perceive so many internal marks of their truth, and experience so much of their efficacy to make him wiser and better, as will easily dispose him to acknowledge their divinity, that they were given by inspiration of God \*. (And why should I not proceed with the apostle's character of them, modest as it is, and just ?) *And are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God (as well the teachers of religion, as every other Christian) may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16.



the low date or allegorical turn he has given to the book, however wrought up with great art, and an uncommon force of genius, and a celebrated text. (Ch. xix.) "I know that my Redeemer liveth," which no interpreters of Job's hope of a retri-

